WILLIAM GIBBONS

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A Memoir

OF

WILLIAM GIBBONS,

BY

THEODORE TEBBETS.

And, doubtless, unto thee is given
A life that bears immortal fruit,
In such great offices as suit
The full-grown energies of heaven.

Printed for his Friends.

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. . . Thy young life was rounding to its prime,
Graceful and gradual, with a tidal scope;—
Its outer ripple fell with silvery chime,
Already, near the waiting feet of Hope.

And of great galleons, freighted to the brim,
She—looking seaward with expectant eyes—
Up from beyond the far horizon's rim
Already saw the filmy topmasts rise.

But ah! That tide shall never reach its height;
Those stately vessels never hail the shore:
Before the voice could form the words, "'tis night,"
Darkness came down—the vision is no more.

Oh! sudden night! Oh! weary, weary pang!
None of those parting memories sad and brief,
Around which Love with clinging arms might hang,
And sob itself to slumber and relief.

No clasp of hands—no mutual sigh for sigh—
No flickering smile before the soul is past—
No look to tell us from the closing eye
That what we love has loved us to the last.

Our startled hearts half disbelieve in death
For those round limbs,—that lip with life's perfume;
They half believe we can with yearning breath
The just extinguished taper re-illume.

Yet thought hath still for us the gracious boon
That, loving, pure and joyous as the day,
Thy tender graces, hid ere manhood's noon,
Shall know not alienation or decay.

Though of the moon, behind the twilight hill,
To man a silver thread alone appear,
For God she waxes not nor wanes, and still
Turns to the sun a perfect, full-orbed sphere.

And though the visible for us may die,
Though the receding ocean leave the shell,
Faith's listening ear can catch the murmured sigh—
"Love on, dear hearts! The dead can love as well."

William Gibbons, the oldest child of James Sloane and Abby Hopper Gibbons, was born in Philadelphia on the sixteenth of January, 1834. He died in Cambridge, Massachusetts, on the seventeenth of December, 1855.

His father was born in Wilmington, Delaware, where his father, Dr. William Gibbons, was an eminent physician for more than forty years. William's mother, the daughter of the well-known philanthropist, Isaac T. Hopper, was born in Philadelphia. Both parents, and their ancestors, belonged to the Society of Friends, so that William was trained in the principles and the practice of "Quakerism," and early formed, what he never

lost, a strong love for the principles and peculiarities of that people,—

> The simple tastes, the kindly traits,
> The tranquil air, and gentle speech,
> The silence of the soul that waits
> For more than man can teach.

When he was only thirteen months old his parents removed to New York, where he spent the rest of his life, except the last few months at Cambridge. The characteristics of later years were manifested in early childhood. From the beginning, he was remarkably truthful, ingenuous, and conscientious. He first sought what was right, then what was pleasant. It is remembered that one First Day morning he was sent in from the garden to put on clothes suitable for his employment; as he did not return for a long time, anxious search was made for him through the neighborhood; he came back at last, equipped for work, but having first gone in his "best clothes" to the "Friends'" meeting. A friend at Perth Amboy writes: "My reminiscences of his boyhood, when he used to visit us, are singularly vivid and delightful. With a single exception, he was the only child I ever knew who seemed to

have no conscious self. The happiness of others seemed to be his proper personal capital: the more they had, the richer was he."

His imagination was lively, and he frequently extemporized little narratives suggested by natural objects, claiming that he owned the landscape with all the flocks and herds. As he grew older, this faculty and his love of imitation roused a fondness for dramatic exhibitions, which he always enjoyed with the keenest zest. He was brought up at home and was not sent to school till he was nearly seven years old. He was a prompt and discriminating learner, and an obedient, affectionate pupil; but he was not a precocious child; his mind was rather symmetrical and evenly developed and free from tricks of one-sidedness and exaggeration; he was fond of reading and had a quick and retentive memory; he was a genuine boy, full of vivacity and frolic, a lover of active sports and of innocent mischief; brave, affectionate, open-hearted, with a prompt sense of honor and justice. His robust constitution was never impaired by vice, or by premature sobriety and dignity, or by undue urging of the intellect; and so

he was a healthy boy and a remarkably vigorous youth, with an equal capacity and an equal relish for both work and play. One of his earliest letters, written in large school-boy hand, indicates that he was by no means lacking in sportiveness:

. . . . . When it snows, I and a lot of other boys, as we are going home from school, make snowballs and fire them at the men who go around cleaning the pavements, and when they turn around to see who it is, we bow to them, ask them if is not a pleasant day, and say we do it merely to attract their attention. Sometimes they chase us, but they have never yet succeeded in catching us. At other times we will stop omnibuses and ask their drivers what time it is. . . . .

When he was about nine years old, he entered the school of Messrs. Leggett and Guillaudeu, under whose charge he continued until he began his professional studies, about eight years later. Between the teachers and the scholar a strong affection was formed, which lasted to the end of William's life. He had discernment enough to perceive that there is no necessary state of enmity between an instructor and his pupil, but rather an opportunity for a most pleasant and profitable

friendship. His teachers found him a diligent and enthusiastic student, especially in mathematics, for which he always had a peculiar fondness. "Geometry," he once wrote to his sister, "thee will find an easy and an agreeable study. Some of the problems are to me more beautiful than nine tenths of the pictures in the exhibitions." And afterwards, in college, he used to exceed the requirements of his tutor, by presenting several demonstrations besides the one in the text-book. In all his studies, however, he was never so proud as to chafe under correction, or to spurn the suggestion of an error. He was always eager, on the contrary, to be set and kept right. His choice of companions, in his school-days, was determined by genuine sympathy and respect. Among his earliest playmates were several boys of his own age whose parents were day-laborers. But they were none the less worthy of regard in his estimation, and he never gave up the friendship, and never neglected them on occasions of home-entertainment. He had a happy faculty, too, of placing them on easy terms with his other acquaintances, and making all distinction on grounds of social rank disappear.

Born of a family spontaneously and practically philanthropic, he inherited their character, and was trained in their ways of charity and love and quiet self-sacrifice. From hearing his Grandfather Hopper relate anecdotes of the escape of fugitive slaves, he early imbibed a cordial hatred of slavery and of all kinds of oppression, which was only confirmed by the convictions of his riper years. In one of his earliest letters, written while he was on a visit in the country, he expressed his great sorrow at being away from New York during the annual Anti-Slavery Convention. Once, at a meeting, he was deeply moved by an appeal for funds to sustain the anti-slavery cause, and after deliberation, requested his father to give for him seven dollars—the total amount of his little savings; on returning home, he gave them all to his father, and never afterwards alluded to the subject. He was always in the habit of visiting, with his Grandfather Hopper, or his mother, the cells of the Penitentiary and the Tombs, and he thus became acquainted with the worst crimes and the deepest suffering of New York, and early learned to abhor vice and guilt, and to pity and succor the ignorant

and wretched victims of sin and misery. The following letter to one of his sisters away at school will show an immediate practical lesson he drew from such scenes:

New York, Nov. 18, 1851.

. . . . . Thee says that you have no holidays from one year's end to another. I can tell thee that in comparison with the lot of hundreds and thousands in this and all other cities, all your days are holidays. They have to get up before it is light, and go to work, and do not stop till dark or bed-time. They not only have no holidays, but no enjoyments. They are put to work before they are ten years old, and keep at it all their lives, barely making a living. If thee will only think of the life of those less fortunate than thyself (and they are by far the greater number), thee will not complain. . . . .

I miss you both a great deal, and if I did not think you were learning to be *women* (who are now very scarce), I should most heartily wish you were at home again. . . . . .

He learned, too, from this intimate contact with the homeless and the guilty, to put a high and serious value upon the blessed restraints and inspiration of a happy domestic life. This appears,

in a slight degree, in a letter written to an aunt in 1851 :

. . . . . Thee don't know how much I count upon having, at some future time, a happy home. The chief object of my ambition is to benefit the more unfortunate and poorer classes ; my next (this is a selfish one), to lead a happy, quiet, domestic life. To do the latter, I *must* find a nice wife. If I were to say the above to some persons with whom I am acquainted, they would say that one, who loves excitement of all kinds as much as I do, could never settle down. They don't know me as well as I know myself. A happy home is my idea of heaven. This is extravagant, but I think it is true. . . . . .

When William was seventeen years old, he began to study Law in the office of Luther R. Marsh, Esq. He was led to the legal profession by the example of several uncles, the wishes of his parents, and his own strong inclinations. It seemed adapted to both his philanthropic and his imaginative nature. As a lawyer, he could aid the unfortunate in the redress of wrongs and the attainment of justice, and his dramatic and persuasive powers would have the widest scope. He looked upon Law as a Science, and not merely an Art,—as the noblest occupation of a humane and

generous man, and not simply as affording a livelihood or honor to a selfish pettifogger,—

The rhythmic rule of earth and sky.

When he had pursued his legal studies two years, he wrote thus enthusiastically: "The legal profession is the noblest, best and greatest that now exists. It is amazing to me, that every young man does not enter it. I really pity a medical or theological student, or a young man entering upon mercantile life. There is so little chance for them! But there is a great chance at the law. You can hope to be greater than any other profession could make you, even if you were first in it." He studied with great perseverance, always remaining in the office through the full business hours. But he lost none of his interest, and abated none of his activity in all domestic and public affairs. The arrival of Kossuth in this country aroused all his enthusiasm and sympathy, and that splendid orator had no heartier admirer than William Gibbons, with his keen appreciation of eloquence and his inborn hatred of oppression. His letters, written during

the great Hungarian's triumphal march through the land, are full of these feelings.

A favorite uncle, Dr. Josiah Hopper, was for several years the surgeon of a California steamer, on the Pacific side; and William's full and frequent letters to him, bright, humorous, with vivid pictures of the current events in the family and in the city, are models of home-bulletins to a distant wanderer. In one of them, it was his duty to relate the details of his Grandfather Hopper's last hours. A few extracts are given below, to illustrate William's own serious and cheerful views of death and immortality:

New York, May 11, 1852.

. . . . Grandfather retained his faculties, his likes and dislikes, his prejudices and partialities to the last; and he has really left so much behind him to remember and to be grateful for, that it seems to me as if he were not all gone, but that a part of him, a great part, is left to us. . . . . He said that "we must not grieve but be happy with him," and I am sure thee will. It was really beautiful to see with what confidence he spoke of seeing his old friends after he was dead. From his conversation you would suppose that he was going

on a visit to some near and very dear relations. He must be so happy now that none of us feel as if we would call him back, since it could be for only a short time. . . .

I know that I myself should feel greater *grief* for one whom I had not loved nearly so much as I did and do love Grandfather, because there is something of him *left*. When we begin to talk at the supper table, we involuntarily say something or other which he has said, and think of something which he has done. It is impossible for us to realize that he is dead, and, according to my ideas of death, he is not. Washington is not dead. He is alive, not only in our memories, but also exerts his influence over our conduct as a nation. So it is with Grandfather; his influence is exerted over us as if he were living, and, with the exception of the selfish gratification and pleasure of his *personal* company, he is as much alive to us now as he ever was. . . .

During these years William's sisters were attending school in Lenox, and they never failed to receive from him, every week, two letters of home news and fraternal love. He never regretted the cost of time and trouble in helping to make them contented and happy, both at home and abroad. His efforts in their behalf were not measured by any calculations of duty—they were

the impulsive manifestations of a self-forgetful, overflowing love. He describes to them the "royal times" to be had at home in their vacations, and imagines the winter sleigh-rides, or the summer walks and rides he will have with them amid the woods and hills of Berkshire when he visits them. They were the chosen companions of his later as of his earlier years. He was constant in his preference of their society in circumstances which would have sorely tried the fraternal loyalty of most young men. One of the Lenox excursions he describes in a letter home, dated July 21, 1852:

. . . . . Last night we went on an excursion through Ice Glen, as it is called, a very narrow and difficult passage between two mountains. The girls were all dressed fantastically, as were also all the ladies of the party, and some of the gentlemen. We had torches, made of a roll of rags, fastened at the end of a stick, and dipped in turpentine. They made a very large flame and gave forth a bright and penetrating light. We rode from Mrs. Sedgwick's to Stockbridge, from there to as near the Glen as we could get with the vehicles, then crossed one or two fields on foot, when we arrived at the opening of the Glen. This momentous and interesting event was celebrated by salutes (not from the

gentlemen, but) from a cannon, then by a whistle from the leader, when, instanter, night became day by the glare of innumerable torches, which were all lighted at once. The procession then moved. It had proceeded but a few feet, when I suddenly and unexpectedly found myself entirely unhurt at the bottom of a hole, about six feet deep. But I jumped out, and advanced with the rest. After various exciting pulls up rocks, and slides down them, tumblings down over some and tumblings up over others, squeezing through cracks and crevices, and creepings through holes, with some burrowing, we halted to renew our now expiring torches, and to be gratified with a display of blue lights. Every torch and every light was put out, and we were left in total darkness, to which the shades of the lower regions can be nothing All standing or sitting (as they happened to be) were still as still could be. When suddenly the fearful silence was broken by a mysterious whistle, and about a dozen immense blue lights from various parts of the glen were lighted, producing the extremely agreeable effect of making us all look as if we were refugees from some neighboring grave-yard. . . . . .

The torches, after some more firing from cannon, were relighted, and we again proceeded. At the other end of the glen a tar-barrel had been set on fire, and we stood around it for half an hour or more, singing songs. We then came home, and reached there at about half-past twelve o'clock. . .

He writes with a humorous grandiloquence to his oldest sister on her birthday:

Not considering myself competent to offer any remarks upon an occasion so important as thy seventeenth birthday—important not only to thyself and thy immediate family, but also to the community at large—involving, as it does, so many questions of national and international interest; among which may be enumerated the Fishery question, Women's Rights, Protective Tariff, and Internal Improvements—an occasion to which the down-trodden masses of Europe have been looking forward, not only with expectation and hope, but with confidence and faith—an occasion which will long be remembered by the suffering humanity of both hemispheres—an occasion which will materially, and, I have no doubt, beneficially affect the solar system and lamps—to deliver an address in commemoration of *such* an occasion, I frankly and freely confess myself totally and wholly incompetent, and cheerfully resign it to abler and more talented craniums. I have done. . . . .

TO HIS SISTER.

New York, Jan. 11, 1853.

. . . . . Mother is much better,—almost well. She was imprudent in going out, and took a very heavy cold. It made the house seem very

lonely, to have her away from the family circle. Sally, father, and I, make very poor company when mother is sick abed. She is a good mother, isn't she? and a kind mother, and a true mother? Nobody else ever had such a mother, as thee and I and Sally and Jule have, had they? They may think differently, but they're mistaken. If they'd had our mother for their mother, they would know that it is so! . . . . .

It is cloudy and foggy and drizzly. I ought to feel "under the weather,"—down-hearted, desponding, melancholy, &c.—and make myself disagreeable to everybody, but I don't. Somehow or other, I feel light-hearted and good-humored to-day—just like writing to my little and dear sister Lucy. If this would not reach her ears, I would tell her how we all love her at home, and how lonely the house is without her. . . . . But I mustn't tell her that, for it would make her vain and proud, and "pride is sinful." . . . . .

TO HIS SISTER.

NEW YORK, March 8, 1853.

This brother of thine is a sad sort of fellow, a chap who never thinks of attending promptly to the execution of any commissions with which he may be honored by you young ladies. It is a wonder to me that you ever ask him to do anything for you.

You "don't know nothink" or you wouldn't have nothin' to do with such a willful procrastinator — a confirmed "to-morrow man." He claims that he has a defense, or, to be a little less legal, that he has an excuse for this unwonted delay in attending to said commissions. I don't believe any such thing, but I suppose we must hear what he has to say, or he would circulate all sorts of slanderous stories about us. He would say he wasn't allowed to say a word in exculpation of his fault, that permission was refused him to explain his heinous conduct, that we were Jeffries over again, &c., &c.; so, upon the whole, I think it would be more prudent to hear him, especially as he says he only wishes to read an affidavit, and that a short one, so, Gulielme, "locomote" (present, imperative, singular).

We settle down in our judicial chair, put on a thoughtful expression, look dignified and impartial, and hear the following read by Will aforesaid:

City and County of New York: William Gibbons, youth of said city and county, being duly affirmed, says: That he was authorized to execute certain commissions, by numerous divinities; and that he, the said William, has executed the same As to the delay, of which he confesses himself to be guilty, he says, that he wished to send, in the same package with the commissions above mentioned, certain books which he, the said William Gibbons, had borrowed some time ago of one Mrs. Sedgwick, but,

as he wished to get said books bound, and found that it would take nearly a week to accomplish the same, he decided not to wait for said books, &c.

Affirmed to before me this 8th day of March, 1853.

A. B. Conquest,

Commissioner of Deeds.

TO HIS SISTER.

New York, April 9, 1853.

. . . . . Winter has departed. Its bleak and blustering blasts have gone to other lands. Spring, sweet, budding, greening Spring, hath already begun to deck herself in her gay garments. She is wrapping her green robes about her, and is adorning her auburn hair with bright flowers, and scattering sunshine in her path, and she bounds lightly over the fields, careful not to crush or wound the tenderest plant; birds follow her with sweet and joyous songs, telling men of the fruits which her sisters, Summer and Autumn, will bring them. Sometimes she stops to nurse some little plant less hardy than its fellows—at other times she'll cheer some modest one that is peeping from behind a lump of earth, as if it were afraid to trust the open air, or loved to linger

in the home that has sheltered it from Winter's harsh and gnawing cold. Spring of the earth has come!

"Spring" of my heart, when wilt thou visit me? When wilt thou come with flowers in thy hair, and sunbeams in thine eyes? When shall I hear that voice of melody say, "You horrid thing!"

TO HIS SISTER.

New York, June 23, 1853.

My Dear Sœur:—I feel extremely flattered by the opinion thee was so kind as to express regarding my abilities, &c.; and with such encouragement, it is needless for me to say that I will apply myself with renewed energies to the study of the art of composition. I can with sincerity return the compliment, and add that, if thy letters were all such as thy last to me, and not confined to the naming of articles to be sent in the next bundle, they would be widely read, and eagerly sought after. . . . . .

As William's legal studies went on, he began to feel himself hindered by the social demands of a residence in the metropolis, and also to crave opportunity for a more thorough study of the elementary principles of Law than seemed possible

in an office. His mind therefore gradually turned towards the Law School at Cambridge, to which he was attracted by its reputation among lawyers and by his acquaintance with many of its graduates. So early as January, 1853, he had broached the subject to his parents both in conversation and in written appeals. In one of the latter he thus alludes to one motive for going to Cambridge:

> . . . . I am surrounded here by social temptations, which, though not pernicious, perhaps, in themselves, consume much time which should be devoted to study and reading, and it is more than difficult to resist them,—to some extent impossible. If a sapling be surrounded by vines and trees which hinder its growth, and which it is impossible to remove, you transplant it to a place where it will be relieved from such impediments; so it becomes a strong and sturdy tree, when otherwise it would lead but a poor and sickly life. . . . . .

The matter rested for some time undecided, but William did not lose his conviction of the usefulness of his plan, nor give up urging it. His father entertained very strong objections, partly from a natural reluctance to expose his now only son to the moral risks of a University

life, but chiefly from a tender desire for the continued daily intercourse with such a son, who was now of an age to be his father's companion and friend. The son felt and appreciated the force of these reasons, but still he could not abandon a scheme which seemed to him necessary for the highest success and happiness of his life. He addressed to his parents a long and formal argument, written on several sheets of "deposition paper," to urge an affirmative answer to the question—"*May I go to the Cambridge Law School?*" It is a very compact, forcible, and affectionate paper, written in the most earnest and the most filial spirit. He answers, one by one, the objections to his plan, and states vividly and pointedly its advantages, fortifying himself at the end by a long quotation from Blackstone in favor of an elementary acquaintance with Law as a science. To the objection that a Law School makes the acquirement of legal knowledge too easy a task and strips it of its power as an intellectual discipline, he says.

"If it be intended by this that the conquering of a difficulty by a student is better for him than

to have it explained away by a teacher or professor—the conquering of it being a sort of mental gymnastic exercise—it is true ; and the truer it is, the greater is the advantage of Law Schools. The great instrument of instruction and improvement used in them is the bringing of minds into collision—a wrestling of minds, which, calling every faculty, every mental muscle, into play, develops each of them just in proportion to its use ; and this use is the same as it will be in actual life ; for their Moot Courts are the gymnasium whose prototypes are the real courts of the land.

"A Law School does not 'strip the road of knowledge of its difficulties ;' it only properly equips the student for his travels, and points out the right road. And this is a bright contrast to my life in the office, where I pick up books almost at haphazard, and, not knowing where to look in them for what is valuable, spend hours upon entirely profitless portions. It cannot be wrong to put the best books into the student's hands, and if there be parts of them which will be of no profit, to tell him to avoid them. It cannot be wrong to read with him, and, if he misconceives, to correct him ; or, if he does not clearly comprehend, to explain and illustrate and enlarge upon what he reads. It cannot be wrong to subject him to daily examinations, whereby his ignorance or unfaithfulness is exposed, in the presence of his fellows, to his shame and disgrace, by a dread of which he is stimula-

ted to industry and application. It cannot be wrong to excite his ambition to be something, and to impress upon his mind that his ambition can only be gratified by hard work. All this a Law School does, and what office could do it?"

His conclusion of the argument is as follows:

"In closing, I would say that this is not a whim of the moment, but a *conviction*, after examination of, and thought upon, the subject in all its bearings. That my heart, as well as my understanding, is enlisted, you need not to be told."

His parents could not withstand the forcible reasonings and the strong desires of their son, and consented, though reluctantly, to his going to Cambridge. Accordingly, he entered the Law School at the beginning of the Spring Term, in March, 1854. His room, exquisitely simple and neat in all its appointments, was in the upper story of Divinity Hall, opening upon the quiet woods of "Norton's Grove." Here, far away from the noise and dust of the streets, amidst the little comforts and luxuries which he had brought from New York to remind him of home, he devoted himself to study, with an energy stretched to its utmost tension by the consciousness of a golden opportu-

nity, and the thought of his parents' sacrifice in his behalf; and he used every possible means of improvement. He was elected a member of the Coke Club, which had then the best reputation among the Students' Law Clubs, and he always prepared himself for its legal discussions with the thoroughness of a faithful lawyer striving heartily for his client. In the Moot Courts—at which one of the Professors always presided in the presence of the whole school—his arguments attracted attention by their careful preparation and vigorous presentation of points, as well as by his animated and urgent manner. In the "Parliament"—a Debating Society on the model of a legislative body—he showed himself a fluent, impassioned debater, with rare powers of persuasion and conviction. He was always ready, especially, to vindicate his views of slavery, which, in such an assembly of young men, were sure of many spirited opponents. It was in the days of excitement which attended the surrender of Anthony Burns to a Southern master. He wrote to an uncle:

"It is not to friends alone that I owe the pleasantness of life here. One's study, prosecuted as it

is here, is a source of real delight. I am getting more and more fond of it every day. It doesn't seem like study. Our Moot Courts, for instance, are as exciting as a game of ball or any other sport."

He found time at odd hours for a good deal of active sports, for social visiting in Boston and the neighboring towns, and for his favorite indulgence of letter-writing. His correspondence with his friends was extensive and full, especially with those who were always first in his affections and esteem—the father and mother and sisters at home. So regular were his letters home, that, when one failed to reach New York at its appointed time, a telegram was immediately sent to inquire if he were sick! His letters for that circle were the frankest and most detailed pictures of his daily life, inward as well as outward. They were sometimes humorous, sometimes thoughtful. At one time he would write to a sister the most playful of notes, at another he would offer her advice on the most serious topics, consulting not only her immediate pleasure but her happiness in far-off future years. It is scarcely possible to give more than a few brief extracts from such family letters.

TO HIS SISTER.

CAMBRIDGE, March 7, 1854.

. . . . . A body feels pretty lonely sometimes, when he is the hermit that I am. But, since I have commenced study, the time passes much more swiftly and pleasantly. One's books become companions, and good sociable fellows they are, willing to talk as long as you choose to listen, and no longer; not always, I admit, fashioning their discourse to your humor, but unsought is the company of him who always is just what you would have him. I don't want everybody to be pleasant, when I am so, nor would I have them agree to whatever I say. A difference in feeling and in opinion is often desirable. It gives rise sometimes to delightful quarrels, which serve to vary the monotony of eternal good-humor. One don't know what it is to be happy, unless he has been unhappy. One can't enjoy an entertaining book, with real zest, unless he be compelled at times to read a stupid one. . . . . .

TO HIS MOTHER.

CAMBRIDGE, March 13, 1854.

. . . . "Somehow or other," my pen is not garrulous. It won't talk. I'm sure it ought to have more on its nib, when writing to thee, than if

I were writing to almost anybody else; but it has not, and I know not the reason. It is unpleasant for me to give a statement of facts or occurrences. I don't like to write history half so well as I do my thoughts. For instance, I began to give a description of my new quarters. My mind wearied—my pen became dumb, until I happened to think that I was tired, and that my pen was mute, when it began to be the easiest thing in the world to write and tell this. . . . . .

Mother, I am going to convince thee that thee ought to be better pleased with this stupid letter than if I had written one that had merit in its composition. When I can write easily, it is no labor, but a pleasure. When my mind drags, it is real work to write. Who would thank another for doing that which pleased him? But who would not be grateful to one who had done that which was a labor and a task, for the sake and with the end of gratifying you? . . . . .

TO HIS SISTER.

CAMBRIDGE, March 25, 1854.

. . . . . Thy education has been such that a gross, vulgar and ignorant man would be repulsive to thee. None but a gentleman, refined

and generous, would please thee at all. But there is something more than generosity or refinement, or any other personal good quality, which is worthy of the greatest regard. This is the character of the man, so far as it relates to his worldly success, both pecuniary, professional and social. It is just possible for a woman to be happy with an easy, good-natured, unambitious man, who never did wrong. Some women might be happier with such an one than under other circumstances. But is our personal happiness alone to be thought of? Is it not a young woman's duty, and pleasure too, I hope, to seek a place in the community where she lives, which will enable her to benefit and aid others? With such a man as I have described, this could not be. He would hurt nobody, to be sure; but whom would he help or bless? and whom could his wife help or bless? He would live only for himself, and would not have the means to let his wife lead a better life, nor would he appreciate any such effort on her part. . . . . .

TO HIS YOUNGEST SISTER.

CAMBRIDGE, April 1, 1854.

Don't think that I am going to humbug thee and fill only a page of this sheet, so that, when thee turns over the leaf, thou wilt find nothing there! The whole four pages are to be filled, whether with

good talk, or so-so talk, or very poor talk, I don't know yet, for of course I can't tell what I am going to say. There is one thing, though, that I mean to talk about, and that is thy cat—not because it is a cat suggestive of ideas, so that it would be easy to write about it, nor because I love it far above all other cats, nor because its accomplishments and virtues are such as cat never possessed before—but because thou art fond of it, and what is pleasant to thee I cannot but take an interest in. Before I came to Cambridge I used to say that thy cat had too much of thy love, and that it would be better to transfer some of it to objects more worthy of thy regard. Now I'm not sure that I wasn't right, but absence from home and from thee makes me disposed to treat this matter more leniently than I did. In short, I haven't the heart to scold at it, and am even going so far as to humor it a little. When I get home, and begin to forget how I felt when we were parted, I'll be cross about it again; but perhaps by that time thou wilt have outgrown thy predilections in favor of cats, and of yellow cats, at any rate. It is a very pleasant thought to me that there are so many little girls in the world who have cats for pets, and what a deal of care they bestow upon them, and how cruelly cats would fare if they hadn't such kind-hearted little mistresses. Just think how many thousands of saucers (the "cracked" ones) are taken from kitchen closets by as many thousand little girls, and filled with milk from exactly the same number of

milk-pitchers, and set upon the hearth for puss to drink from. And then the naps these happy pussies take in the laps of little girls! When I look about me, and see the pretty sweethearts that walk the streets and crowd at parties, and those (the best of all) who light their own homes with their sweet faces, and make the poorer houses of others brighter with their kind acts, I can't help wishing that, instead of being a little boy, I had been several hundred cats, to sleep on the aprons of these darling girls, to be stroked by their soft hands, and to be petted and fed and spoiled, as all cats are. I'm rather glad I'm a human being now, and, as wishing won't help me, I'll try to feel that it was better for me not to be five hundred cats. . . . .

Six months ago I made up my mind that work was not the bore that most people thought it, and I believe this agrees with me. I'm sure of this, that one's day never runs away so swiftly as when you're busy from morning till night. I have nothing to do but study, so it is not hard for me to keep at it, but I should think thee would have to struggle once in a while against temptation. I know how distracted I used to be at home with news, and parties, and sweethearts, and fun, and I haven't faith enough in my ability to resist their allurements, to be willing to expose myself again. Here there is nothing to attract but Boston, and Boston is three and a half miles off. . . . . .

TO HIS FATHER.

CAMBRIDGE, April 14, 1854.

. . . . . One can learn a great deal here in conversation with friends, and in reading for pleasure. Right after dinner I read history for about an hour, and very frequently in the evening also. Whenever I am alone in my room, and study-hours are over or not yet come, I must of necessity do this to employ my time, to prevent being dissatisfied for want of something to do. I have experienced the tortures of idleness on one or two of my holidays, on which, that they might be holidays, I determined to do nothing like work; but I found that employment of some sort, reading history or some old English writer, was much less laborious than doing nothing. I have now out of the library a volume of Burke's writings and a volume of the Spectator. Gibbon's Rome I have of my own, and am reading it. . . . . .

In the following letter to his mother, he alludes to his two little brothers, who had died some time before in early childhood:

CAMBRIDGE, April 29, 1254.

. . . . . It is a great satisfaction to know that Isaac and Jimmy have been removed to Greenwood. To the former I am still singularly attached. My affection for him can have subsided but little.

At times he seems almost to be with me. My remembrance of Jimmy is not so vivid, and, although I seem to retain a distinct memory of his appearance, the love I have once felt for him has almost gone, or rather is almost latent, for it *is some time to revive.* Next vacation I must visit Greenwood—perhaps we can go together. Such an arrangement would be very agreeable to me. Going there would be free from all bitterness, I think. Time is not only soothing in its effect upon me, after such calamities as have visited us within the past few years more frequently, but soon makes me experience satisfaction in thinking of those who have been taken away. Sadness remains, but anguish and gloom do not. . . . . .

Familiar contact with superior minds is a severe test of a young man's character. It causes envy, or despondency, or self-complacency, in weak and shallow minds. In William Gibbons it awakened a keen sense of his own deficiencies, and an honorable but inflexible resolution to remedy them and equal his associates by a faithful use of the necessary means, at any cost.

Constant social intercourse and frequent legal encounters with graduates of the University showed him their advantage, derived from the discipline and resources of a thorough education, and gradually determined him to seek the same power through the same slow method. He wanted to be a ready man and a full man, a sound lawyer and an eloquent advocate, and he resolved to lay the solid and firm foundation in a complete Collegiate training. He never dreamed of any super-

ficial and half-way measure, but, after long deliberation and after seeking the advice of his friends and of President Walker, made up his mind to retrace his steps and "fit for College."

First, however, it was necessary, of course, to obtain the consent and sympathy of his parents, and to impress them with a conviction of his own steady and eager purpose. Accordingly, he wrote them the following letter, as a formal statement of what he had often before expressed to them:

CAMBRIDGE, June 18, 1854.

My Dear Father and Mother:—You have always manifested so much kindness in caring for my interests, that I ought, perhaps, to rest satisfied with what you have done, and be thankful for my good fortune in having such parents. I owe you now more than I can ever repay, and yet I am about seeking an increase of my debt of gratitude. In seeking this increase, I think I show an appreciation of your real anxiety to do all in your power to insure my success and welfare; and feeling this to be your wish, is it not my duty to aid you as far as I can, and, if any plan suggests itself to me, the execution of which would brighten my prospects, should I not inform you of it, and thereby assist

in fitting me for as useful a life as is possible, which I consider to be our joint object?

I admit that I am ambitious—ambitious to be no ordinary man, if my capacities will allow, and I am willing, even eager, to work hard and to seize every opportunity to secure the object of my ambition. What that eminence which I seek ought to be, you know; and I hope that the influence of example and teaching, on your parts, has had some effect. If it was desired to excite a wish, or rather a determination, to be of some service to the world, then it has been successful. I know that, to do this, continued and laborious exertion is requisite; but this I am ready to meet. I know that sacrifices of pleasure must be made, but I shrink not from them.

For the purpose of making more certain the accomplishment of the object above mentioned, I propose to devote my time exclusively to study until I am twenty-six years old; to begin preparing for college on the termination of the present term of the Law School, and to enter the Sophomore class at the Commencement of 1855. I would graduate in 1858, resume my legal studies at the Law School for eighteen months, and then begin the practice of my profession.

I have thought seriously about this course for some months, and it is now a settled purpose, wanting only your consent and approbation. It is not a

request urged without thought or inquiry of what I am to go through ; but it is made after reflection. You may remember that I preferred the same request, verbally, about a year ago, when you answered it unfavorably. Since then, and in spite of your refusal, it has continued to haunt my mind ; and my late change of habits and residence has had the effect of strengthening my conviction of its advisability—indeed, I now almost regard it as a necessity. My life has never been studious—it was impossible that it should be so amid the social and other distractions of New York, and I would not undertake to carry out the plan proposed, if I were to do it there. In Cambridge, removed from almost every temptation from industry, with strong allurements to it, and where one's ambition is so aroused as to nerve to energetic and constant effort, it is very different. Though my stay here has been short, its effect has been wonderful in convincing me of the necessity of hard study. . . . . .

It may be urged that I should have entered college when I was seventeen or eighteen years old—that it is now too late. I would reply that there are always a number as old, and some older, in every class—that since I was seventeen or eighteen, my time has been given to the study of Law, and has not been lost, and that it amounts to nothing more than an inverting of the usual order of study. I have pursued a portion of my legal studies before completing those academical in their character. I shall enter upon business life just as early as I should

if I had gone through college earlier, namely, at about twenty-six or twenty-seven, before which age it is not regarded as wise for a young man to enter upon the practice of Law, if it is possible to help it. Besides, shall I not in fact be the gainer by going through college at a more advanced age, and consequently possessing a maturer mind, a stronger disposition to work, and a conviction of its necessity? . . . . . .

I have now no wish to abandon Law. I regard the plan which I propose as a part of my legal education. I want not only to be well read in Law, but to be possessed of some general knowledge. Can it be said that I could gain this general knowledge while continuing my Law studies? I think not, for each would interfere with the other. My energies would be wholly given to neither, and each requires undivided thought and attention to make rapid progress; and, to attain any eminence now, a man must progress rapidly — it don't do for him to advance slowly. In addition, it would be inevitable that I should entertain a preference for one above the other, and this would tend to create an aversion to that other.

The objection to this plan of absence from home is not so great as you imagine. I should be at home fourteen weeks in the year. Besides, is any sacrifice really made? After my entrance into business, my residence with you will, in all probability, be but for two or three years. It will be about as long if I

enter life at twenty-six as if at twenty-two, and the vacations of the four years' difference will be gained.

. . . . .

Among the many advantages to be derived from the execution of this plan of study, will be the discipline of mind attendant upon it. I have been informed that, by going through College, one acquires the habit of giving an elaborate and thorough investigation to every subject to which he turns his mind, and does not abandon its study before he has spent all the labor upon it which his intellect enables him to put ; he does everything just as well as he can. In this consists the difference between an ordinary and an extraordinary man. Many can do a thing respectably, but comparatively few possess that discipline of mind (even if they have the natural ability, which is useless without it) which enables them to exhaust every subject they take hold of, and do all for it that can be done. The want of this discipline I have felt at Cambridge. One also gains the power of controlling his mind—it becomes obedient to his will, despite of humor or inclination. This is acquired by the necessity of accomplishing so much work daily—sometimes more, sometimes less—until the mind gets habituated to labor. This latter I am very deficient in—I find great difficulty in giving my mind to anything that does not excite interest ; or, if it does, if I lack inclination to attend to it. In addition to all this, one is brought into strict and rigid intellectual conflict with men every day and every hour—and upon my ability to fight with my

mind depends my success in life. One's mental powers are measured with those of others constantly; he learns what men are, and what he is himself; and acquires a confidence essential to a lawyer.

. . . . . .

I am ambitious to become a court lawyer, an advocate; and one's reputation, ability and success are infinitely enhanced by the possession of a reservoir of general information ready at his command. All the knowledge I should acquire in College would be literally at my command, for it would have been gained by *study*, not *reading*. . . . .

Very affectionately your son,

WILLIE.

It was impossible for his parents to refuse assent, even though reluctantly, to this new plan so thoroughly considered and so earnestly entertained; and accordingly, after the summer vacation spent among the hills of Berkshire and in Pennsylvania, William returned to Cambridge invigorated in body and mind, to begin his preparation for College. His instructor was Rev. Theodore Tebbets, then a member of the Divinity School.

He at once went to work with a zest which he never lost, however great discouragements and

difficulties rose up in his path. In fact, he often found inspiration where others find only depression. He formed rules for the division and appropriation of his time, and *kept them*—not capriciously, but uniformly; while, on the other hand, he never became their slave. He denied himself every pleasure that seemed to interfere even with his relish for study, while he found time, when his appointed tasks were done, for abundant exercise, and for frequent social relaxations, and for lively, humorous letters to his sisters, which were often thrown into a poetical form.

His frequent and full letters to the various members of his family furnish a pleasant picture of his Cambridge life during this year, and incidentally disclose many attractive phases of his mind and character. Hardly any other record of this period is needed.

He thus describes his impressions of Cambridge in a letter to his Grandmother:

"There is an air of repose and quiet about the whole place which seems to give one the idea that it

is the abode of students. Omnibuses occasionally pass through the streets, but they don't rattle as they do in cities ; they go quietly, as if afraid of interrupting those engaged in study. I have seen but two wagons since I have been here, and they seemed ill at ease. You hear no shouting or hallooing in the streets. The people, the omnibuses, the horses—all make less noise than other people, other omnibuses and other horses. They all seem to be thinking—thinking—thinking."

TO HIS MOTHER.

CAMBRIDGE, Oct. 8, 1854.

. . . . I am getting along very nicely in my studies. On last Fourth Day, I had gone as far in Greek as Tebbets's class, at Exeter, had gone in fourteen weeks. I had then been at work four. It's pretty tough work sometimes, but, take it altogether, it's a pleasant study. I am now, of course, in the dryest part of it. . . . . .

TO HIS FATHER.

Nov. 7.

. . . . . Some time ago, Tebbets marked a place in my Greek Reader, which he challenged me, jokingly, to reach by the 6th of this month, saying that he thought I could do it if I worked hard. I

was so sick two days that I was compelled to give up work, so my time was extended to the 8th. I have done it. Two minutes ago, at seventeen minutes past 9, P. M., Nov. 7th, I reached the mark.

My views relative to college are as yet unaltered, so, with many thanks for the removal of all obstacles upon thy part, I state the following to be my expectation, as it has long been my wish. Unless something unfortunate occurs to prevent it, or my feelings undergo a change, I will go through. I have stated this in a rough way, but it will be more satisfactory to thee to know unmistakably how I feel about it. It is hard to express gratitude on paper, and it seems to be unnatural besides; so I will manifest it in a way more pleasing to thee, namely: by a steady and close application to study. Thus far, I think my earnestness and sincerity of purpose have been pretty clearly shown; and I am sure I shall bear the test of a year's solitary and constant labor. If I do, it will be no slight test, for sometimes I find it a tough struggle. I have no rivals to emulate, no company to relieve the monotony of study; nothing but myself and my books; and they are books to *work* over. However, I've had years of playtime, so I am far from complaining—but I can't help longing sometimes for home, and for law cases.

Tebbets is very well pleased with my progress, especially in Greek. I shall finish a book this week —Crosby's Lessons—that his class at Exeter were

over seven months upon—I being but a little over two. I can read as much in Cicero in half an hour, and far better than I could at the beginning of the term, in two hours—and I get interested over it. I never read anything that thrills through one, as some of his sentences do. I get as excited, at times, as I ever am when acting charades, which is no stagnant state of mind, as thee knows. . .

Nov. 24.

My Dear Father and Mother :—The bearer of this weighty communication, and far weightier bundle, is of New York city, and consequently of New York State, all of which particulars can be verified by turning to the fifty-second page of a late publication, entitled "A Catalogue of the Officers and Students of Harvard University, for the Academical year 1854–55. First term, Second Edition," &c., &c. Whether any of his ancestors came over with the Normans (I'm writing as if settled in London lodgings), I know not ; nor am I informed whether he is descended from Adam or from Eve, or from neither ; but, that he has many of the good qualities which distinguished the Normans aforesaid, I am sure ; and am also confident that, if the opportunity were presented to him, in the shape of a Newtown pippin, of plunging his posterity into misery and woe, he would not do it. Humor him, if the way opens, in his free-trade prejudices, for he's rabid on it (to speak mildly). Compliment him on

his obliging disposition. Thou canst do this conscientiously, for the accompanying bundle is evidence of it. Believe all the good he says of me—be skeptical as to the bad—but, when he praises himself, make allowances. I don't direct in case he should picture himself other than noble-minded, for that contingency will not arise. . . . . .

TO HIS MOTHER.

Nov. 26.

. . . . . I am very much obliged for thy pains and trouble in the making of my wrapper, and am sure that it will fit and please. If it were to chafe under my arms, reach no farther than my elbows, cover only my back, I think I should enjoy wearing it, be proud of its appearance, and knock even ——— down, if he didn't go into ecstasies over it. . . . . .

TO HIS SISTER.

Dec. 10.

. . . . . Ever since the receipt of mother's last bundle, I have been a devout believer in "rappers;" and, by the exhibition of its contents, have converted many to a like belief. All my friends think it a beauty, and I don't believe there's one equal to it among the students. It fits admirably,

and gives me a distinguished appearance, which rouses awe in the minds of my visitors. . . . .

Why am I not six years old, and pliable enough to be fashioned into a socialist, a water-cure or homœopathic doctor, or a woman's rights lecturer, for then I could hope to have my hand kissed by Lucy Stone. . . . . .

TO HIS SISTER.

DEC. 3.

. . . . . I returned from Exeter yesterday all safe ; was taken especial care of by the conductor, as (aware of mother's anxiety) I chalked "glass" and "with care" on my overcoat. It was no lie, for, being short of cash, it would have been easy to "break" me. . . . Miss J. Gibbons, I have a Greek lesson of three pages ready for to-morrow. "I ain't proud, because pride is sinful." Greek is easier and pleasanter than Latin. I think I shall emigrate to Greece and settle there. . . . . .

TO HIS FATHER.

DEC. 17.

On last Fourth Day evening you had a splendid time at the —'s. If I had been there with you, in accordance with their invitation, I should have been

intoxicated or crazed with the united excitements of a party and of meeting you, the effects of which would not have passed away with a morning's headache, or a short abode in a straight jacket, but would have lasted for weeks, unsettling me, and perhaps making me impatient for the conclusion of my studies, that I might be at home the year round. In six weeks I shall be, for a month, and that's a twelfth of a year round, so I must smother my yearning till the time comes for packing my trunk. . . . . By the way, I am dead broke, and I should like a remittance. I could send an account of my expenditures, if I were where I could get at my day-book, but I am writing this in a friend's room, so you must this time trust to my veracity that I have spent all my money. You ought not to be skeptical. If I should say I am "flush," you might doubt me, for when did I keep money? Don't be uneasy concerning your credit, for I have kept my insolvency a secret, and, if you remit promptly, shall be able to meet all demands. . . .

Christmas Eve, 1854.

My Dear Mother and all:—If I were Dickens, a tale of Christmas Charity should be my present to you, but as I am only "Willie," and have but love to offer, take that—the warmest my heart can give. To-morrow promises me a sort of pleasant sadness. It will not be the merry, careless day it has been, for I must contrast

it with those that are past, and think how lonely this one is. But then I have the thought, which I will cling to as a source of joy, that you at home are having crazy frolics, and that even the poor world has more to drive away its pains and griefs than it has had for a long year. Of all times, Christmas seems the day when parents and children should be together. To me it is the holiest day of the year—and on it I always look back, and see all that I ever loved. Every year makes the past sadder, but I grow fonder of the habit. Pleasure is not all smiles ; when deepest, it is often in tears.

I suspect I've been sentimental in the first page, but if I have, it's my nature, which I may as well own up to, as you will find it out some day or other. Sir Peter Teazle "damned sentiment." I not only refuse to damn that which is real, but believe I could tolerate that which is maudlin. It wouldn't be the hardest thing in the world for me to cry over a Christmas letter home ; so I shall shun all tearful subjects. . . . . .

On last Sixth Day evening, I appeared in character as a teacher at a ragged school. It is anything but a bore. . . . . I wrote one of them, for a copy, "Charity blesses both giver and taker," explaining to him that Shakespeare, some of whose plays, he said, he had seen, had said that in the Merchant of Venice. In a few minutes I saw him in high glee, giggling away and telling something to his neighbor, who began to laugh with

him. I went up and asked what the joke was. After a little hesitation, he said: "Why you—you—you've put a C for Shakespeare." He referred to the C I had written at the end of the line. This raised a laugh against me, but I restored them to their former respect, by disclaiming all intention of writing the C as the initial of Shakespeare's name. They said ever so many other funny things, which served both to amuse me and excite my interest in their studies.

L———, I suppose, will take my place at your Christmas dinner. Next to myself, I should like him to fill it. What a pleasant picture it will be to thyself and father to have three children with you instead of none at all, as it was when the girls were at school.

I am going on well with my studies. My Greek is a pleasure. It is an entertainment to study it.

A few days later he wrote:

Last Christmas morning I went to breakfast as usual. After having been at the table about five minutes, our waiter, a little girl of fourteen years, came up behind me, threw a bundle down on the table, shouting "Merry Christmas, Mr. Gibbons," and rushed out of the room, slamming the door after her. I opened it and found it filled with candies, among which were some conversation lozenges. . . . .

I was selected from all the others at the table as the one upon whom her Christmas gifts were to be bestowed. I thought it was as pleasant a gift and given in as pleasant a way as any that was given the world over, and I was more delighted than I could have been with anything else, from anybody else. I had a book to give her that morning, so my debt was discharged upon the spot. This, and a sleigh ride and five cents which I gave a little darkey, together with a call on a sweetheart and dinner at Mrs. S——'s, made me a far jollier Christmas than I expected. . . . . .

The "ragged" or evening school, to which reference is made in the letter of Christmas Eve, is thus described by a friend, who was intimately associated with William during his Cambridge life :

"It was the first in this quarter, and added the charm of novelty to the ordinary attractions of charity. Here were gathered dull men and bright boys, filthy and clean, dull and ragged—drovers from the West Cambridge Market, omnibus boys, stable-men, printers' devils—every kind of untaught humanity. William Gibbons applied himself with engrossing interest to study this group. He could not leave the lesson half

learned. After a few evenings, he took some of these boys to his room, and drew from them their histories. He was pleased by learning that one, who spoke correctly, had been a servant in some well-educated family, or a frequenter of theatres, while another, who was quick in solving problems in 'Addition,' had been a drover or a baker's boy. He was moved by finding others who wanted to learn for the sake of communicating with their friends beyond the ocean."

A sentence, which William wrote in a letter home about this time, is very touching, when one remembers the end that awaited him: "Mother need not be alarmed for fear of any accident befalling me on some lonely night, while crossing Cambridge Bridge."

TO HIS FATHER.

JAN. 7, 1855.

. . . . H——— and R——— have spent the evening with me, and society and religion have had a four hours' discussion. Society was drubbed soundly, as it appears in public at parties, &c., and in the next breath something was advanced, which, if

it did not exculpate, at least extenuated its hypocrisy and sins. Profitless or not, I'm getting fond of discussing such questions, and I plead guilty to a belief in its being of benefit. Each one of us could tell something which did not make a part of the experience of the others. . . . .

His uncle, Dr. Josiah Hopper, died suddenly at Panama, near the close of 1854. William thus writes of that event to his mother:

JAN. 12.

The sad news of Uncle Si's death has made my evening gloomy. In spite of the care and kindness of strangers towards him, we cannot and ought not to feel reconciled to his dying alone—alone, for none of those who of all the world could claim a place at his bedside to cling to ebbing life, and let him see how sad a thing it was to lose him, none of those were there. Think that no tears were shed over his grave, that no desolated heart followed him to Heaven—that Grandfather, Isaac, Jimmy, saw him coming to them, and heard, perhaps, my careless laugh following on his journey, instead of grief's prayer. It's terrible to die, and bear away no tears and woe. It seems as if our lives had been such that no one loved us. Dear Uncle Si died while we were merry over a jest; but he hears now the wail of our sorrow, and he is comforted. We will be better.

His messages home, the few that have reached me—think how he must have given them. They

bring to me the scene of his death, and it is so sad. Alone, alone—that word forbids consolation—"I couldn't have lived much longer at home." Thee could have *died* at home, Uncle Si. . . . . .

TO HIS SISTER.

JAN. 21.

. . . . . There is gloominess enough in the world; and, if one can, I hold it to be a duty to keep it out of a letter. So every thought that asks for a place on this sheet of paper, to get it, must be of a jolly order—none other shall creep in. Besides, when a body feels like crying, and when crying will do no good, there is a merit in making the grief less sad, if you cant drive it all away.

Intending to treat of various subjects, I shall begin by giving the heading of the *first*, which is to have bestowed upon it my thoughts, until I get through with it, viz.: *Love!* . . . .

II. *Old clothes!* Don't call me a Jew. I'm as staunch a Christian as I was six months ago; and the mere crying of "Old clothes" is not enough to make one a "Moses." I cry "Old clothes," not for others to sell to me, but for others to mend for me. I shall return home with smiles, my clothes will come with "tears." But "home" can drive them away, as it will my own. . . .

Two weeks of the usual winter vacation he spent in Cambridge, by the advice of his instructor, in diligent study. He was always a docile pupil, and readily yielded his inclinations to his teacher's suggestions. When he began his Latin, his teacher advised him not to use certain editions of Cicero, Virgil, and Horace, which he already owned; and he immediately sent them to New York out of the way. The remaining four weeks he spent in New York and Philadelphia, enjoying to the utmost the pleasures of home and society. He returned to Cambridge the last of February.

TO HIS PARENTS.

CAMBRIDGE, Feb. 22, 1855.

. . . . I had nothing to do except to run to the Post Office, until my room was cleaned, &c., by which time I contrived to begin to get homesick. By setting vigorously to work in putting things in order, and unpacking my trunk, I have succeeded in driving away the attack, but I feel that it is only a postponement, and that, sooner or later, despondency and I will have a wrestle. Of course, in time, I shall win; but a long struggle is almost as much to be dreaded as defeat. Everybody now is vainly wishing himself at home. Any attempt to get into good

spirits yourself, or to excite them in others, receives a mortifying snub. It's a good old college custom to feel miserable the first few days of the term, and he who refuses to be wretched is regarded as a rebel and incendiary, seeking to subvert the ancient habits of the University, the perpetuity of which every true and patriotic collegian regards himself as imperatively bound to secure. . . . . My household of Greek and Latin books smiled a welcome to me, and I feel assured that when we once settle down to a cosy tête-à-tête together, the regrets consequent upon leaving home will be less intrusive, and, as we jog sociably along together, dissatisfaction will hardly dare show its face. My Xenophon I took hold of, as I'd shake a friend by the hand. I am impatient to get to work over it, which will be before sundown ; and if the foul fiend homesickness ventures a sally, shouting a Greek word I will fearlessly advance, and chase him to the dark corners of Divinity Hall. . . . .

TO HIS MOTHER.

3D MONTH, 11th.

. . . . . My visit home was only unsatisfactory in not giving me so many quiet times with thee and the family proper. Strangers seemed, and indeed *were* always by, to destroy that family feeling which can only be experienced when none but the nearest relatives are by. The evening seems to be set apart for others ; but the day, at least some part

of it, ought to find a family alone. I don't complain, I only regret and hope it will not be so again. . . . . .

I have worked well and easily this past week; the days slip away and seem hardly more than hours. It is rather jolly than otherwise to study Latin and Greek. After I once get over my books in the morning, I feel safe for the day. I then know it will be night before I should expect dinner, and that homesickness won't threaten me until bedtime. The hardest part of the day, though, to get over without getting blue, is right after getting up. You have a long day before you and haven't got your mind to thinking, so home will thrust itself upon you, and the contrast with my poor little room, which I'm very fond of though, is too much to bear for any length of time, so I hurry and dress, and run off to breakfast as hard as I can, doing all I can to cheat myself into the belief that something very important depends upon my getting there in the shortest possible time. It don't do. Then I try a burlesque opera song, or act a private charade, sustaining all the characters; or make a speech to an intelligent jury, who are always won over by my eloquence and power to do just the right thing, in spite of the efforts of the opposing counsel to bring about a contrary result. Of course, these last two are soon cut short by arriving at Miss Upham's, but at that instant the jury give a verdict in my favor, and my audience in the charade thunder out their applause as our little green muslin curtain falls. Speeches and acting shorten my walks,

when I take any, and prevent their being lonely. *Do thee try them and see.* . . . . .

TO HIS FATHER.

March 25.

. . . . . I am considerably surprised at thy anxiety in relation to my religious faith, and really astonished at thy dread of my adopting any of the superstitions of the past. I can assure thee that thy fears upon this point are unnecessary, and if thee knew the fanatical character nearly all of my acquaintances attach to my belief upon matters of this nature, and could witness the resignation with which I bear continual questions and remarks about it, the last vestige of apprehension would leave thee. To be honest, I don't know that we entirely coincide in mere religious faith; *but I don't know that we differ.* Our conversations have rarely been directed to the subject, and I suppose that neither fully comprehends the views of the other. Of course, mine are still far from being matured, and I would eagerly seize upon any opportunity to be enlightened and assisted by thee. Increasing age has led me to reflect more frequently concerning a matter of such serious importance, and the lonely life I have led for the past six months has increased this tendency; but I can only grope in the dark. What belief I have is owing rather to impulse than reason; which impulse has been di-

rected by the influences under which I have grown up. These, for a year, have been different, but I am not sure that it is to be regretted ; for, though living among people who differ essentially from me in religious creed may to some extent affect my own, at the same time I am constantly called upon to vindicate my own, or to attack theirs, and there is nothing more effective than this in confirming previous impressions. . . . . .

Thou hast allowed me an individuality for many years. I was never required to believe a thing because thee believed it. I am not required to do so now. I don't think, even if I were to contract a more orthodox belief than thine (which is not at all probable, remember), that it is a good ground for anxiety or alarm. So long as it is honest and sincere—so long as it forbids my injuring others than myself—while it exhorts me to do good in every possible way, the only thing that any one is to be in dread of is, *that I won't live up to it.* In this I think that thou wilt agree with me, and I feel as if it was the only platform I could now lay down. Thy general reflections upon the existing church, I am inclined to adopt, but it would be rash for me to assert anything either endorsing or repudiating any of them, until I am better acquainted with its history, and history in general, and have drawn my conclusions deliberately. . . . . .

TO HIS MOTHER.

April 8.

. . . . . I have something else for father. He wrote me a profitable letter touching upon religion. Since its receipt, I have begun and now almost finished Cicero on the Immortality of the Soul, which, if not a *strictly* Quaker publication, at least stimulates thought upon the matter, and shows what the opinions of men, even the most intelligent and liberal, were before the promulgation of the Bible. Whether inspired or not, whether abused or not in its use, it (the Bible) seems to have solved one doubt, and that is in respect to the immortality of man, which no one now disbelieves. He may reply that man would have believed this much if the Bible and Christ were never known to the world. I can only reply to this, that they had not made much or perhaps any progress before towards it under mere heathenism, and it is not fair to say they would have taken a start which would have been contrary to the teachings of the history of centuries. . . .

TO HIS FATHER.

April 22.

. . . . I had rather think a man mistaken than a rogue, any day; and when he has filled his life with noble and charitable acts, and has influenced many for the better, I won't consider him a villain without better reasons for it than that he don't *think* this right, and does that. . . . .

My work progresses with its usual regularity. Tebbets seems to feel pretty confident about me in everything. When I began with him, he was doubting about my Greek; in a few months he became sure of it, but feared for my Latin. It was not long before that ceased to be a cause of alarm. Afterwards he was uneasy about my mathematics; I soon made him easy about that, so that he is just now troubled about nothing. . . . .

TO HIS MOTHER.

JUNE 17.

. . . . . I feel nervous about my examination. I should hardly survive the mortification of failure; so, rather than risk my life, *I won't fail.* Every time I say this (and I say it often) I feel bolder, but the fear *will* come back that I may not pass. I will, though, in spite of my fears. Tebbets says so, and *he knows now.* . . . . . .

A month later, all his doubts and anxieties were put to rest by his admission, "without condition," into the Sophomore Class of Harvard College. He wrote of the examination to a friend: "It was very thorough, and really seemed to test one's knowledge. After getting through with it, I felt that I could not have afforded to give up a single hour of my year's labor. All

that I had learned in that time seemed to have been drawn from me, so that I had nothing left to tell."

The following extract from a letter written to William's parents, shortly after his death, gives a detailed account of this year of preparation for College, and shows the impression he made upon his teacher:

"You know far better than I, the protracted and anxious course of thought which led him at last to determine upon postponing his professional studies and seeking meanwhile a more extended liberal education. You know, too, that he persuaded me to resume my old work of teaching — a work that I never before found so easy, so pleasant, and so prolific of visible and immediate results. Our connection, as pupil and teacher, began the first of September, and ended the middle of the next July. I found him totally unacquainted with Greek, and with a very slight and superficial knowledge of Latin, so that he had to begin with the elementary lessons in that language, too. I confess that at first I was utterly discouraged by the amount of work before him; and it was only after a thorough trial of his aptness for learning and his inexhaustible energy in labor, that incredulity gave way to faith, and I felt sure that he could and would accomplish

the plan he had proposed. The boys at Exeter Academy are four years in doing the work which he did in nine months! And they think they have to work hard enough at that. I thought so as a boy, and afterwards as a teacher there.

"As it may be pleasant to you to have a definite record of the work he did, I will give you an outline of his studies as nearly as I can remember them. In *Latin*, after a minute and thorough mastery of the Grammar, he read the Reader, Cicero's Orations, Virgil's Æneid, the Odes and Epodes of Horace, fifty pages of Livy, and Cicero 'On the Immortality of the Soul,' besides writing the whole of Arnold's First and Second Latin Books, and Arnold's Latin Prose Composition. In *Greek*, he read Crosby's Greek Lessons, the whole of Xenophon's Anabasis, the Poetry in Felton's Reader, one hundred and fifty pages in Herodotus, twenty-five pages in Thucydides, twenty-five pages in Xenophon's Hellenica, and three books of the Odyssey, besides a constant study of Crosby's Grammar, and writing the whole of Arnold's First Greek Book and Arnold's Greek Prose Composition. In *Mathematics*, he went carefully through Thomson's Arithmetic, Loomis's Algebra, Peirce's Geometry, and Peirce's Plane and Spherical Trigonometry, including Surveying and Navigation. He also prepared himself for examination in Ancient Geography and History, and in Smith's History of Greece. All this was accomplished between the 1st of September and the 20th of July, with four weeks taken out for vacation in the winter! I am amazed

when I look back upon this amount of intellectual work, a great deal of which was mere drudgery to so mature a mind as Willie's. And every teacher to whom I have told the story has well nigh refused to credit it.

"It may be suspected that so rapid a progress must have been superficial. But it was not. In all my experience as an instructor, I have never known a more careful scholarship than Willie's. Indeed, the fact that he was one of the twenty who passed the Freshman Examination without a condition, and the *only one* of the fifteen applicants for the Sophomore Class who was admitted without a condition, is a sufficient evidence both of the extent and the exactness of his acquirements. Sir Walter Scott, in painting the character of Edward Waverley, speaks of a fact patent to every observer of men, namely, that with brilliancy of fancy and vivacity of talent there are often wanting energy of application and the power of concentration, and well-defined, exact knowledge. That was not the character of your son. His apprehension was both quick and sure. His memory was as tenacious in keeping as it was swift in receiving. He grasped the meaning of an author with the rapidity of intuition, but he was never satisfied without understanding all the intricacies of idiom, every part of the syntax, and the minutest shades of verbal distinctions. In Greek he was particularly successful. He recognized every beauty of that unrivaled language, and at the same time studied its etymological variations, which usually seem to

the beginner dry and useless, with an enthusiasm Porson himself might have envied. And so it was in all his studies, mathematical as well as classical. In all, he was a rapid learner, a patient, accurate student, and an accomplished, exact scholar. He worked always with indomitable energy, and an ardor that never, to the last, grew dim. Of all my pupils, he could do the most in the shortest time, and do it the best. I remember an illustration of some of his peculiar characteristics as a student. I had requested him not to be enticed into the use of translations, at least till his final review; *then*, I said, he could use them, though probably to no advantage, if he desired to be both speedy and exact. He tried the experiment, on reviewing Herodotus, but found that the translation retarded rather than helped him. He ran out into the avenue and hired the first boy he met to read to him for a week; and it was entertaining to see them—the boy reading what he did not understand a word of, and Willie stopping him occasionally to hunt up authorities in Grammar and Lexicon where his version differed from the translation! Such a pupil it was no task, but a constant and increasing pleasure, to teach. . . . .

"I wish that I could go on to speak of the still dearer qualities of his heart, the more precious endowments of his character. I wish I could tell you how impressed I was—and everybody was—by the thorough manliness of his speech and life, by his frankness, sincerity, generosity, and purity. He won every one's love by his unselfishness, his courtesy,

his simple-hearted affection. He commanded every one's respect by his spotless honor, his unswerving principles, his quickness in discerning and his courage in maintaining the true and the right. Everybody especially honored his absorbing love for his mother, which would never allow him to hear *any* mother alluded to but with respect and affection, without uttering an indignant remonstrance." . . .

After a rest and recreation of six weeks, which he enjoyed as much as he needed after his year of confinement and study, William returned to Cambridge early in September, 1855, as resolute and fervid as ever in his long-cherished purpose.

He was nearly twenty-one years old, in the full flush and strength of early manhood. He possessed a large, muscular, and sinewy body, with the most robust health. His chest was full and his shoulders broad, and his whole person athletic. His weight was about one hundred and sixty pounds, and his height was but an inch less than six feet. He was conscientiously temperate, and almost severe in his regimen.

Of course, a person of so vigorous a constitution and so healthful was no bookworm, though a hard student. His vitality and energy were every-

where apparent. He walked to and from Boston, Medford, Lexington, Concord, and other towns in the neighborhood of Cambridge, to make calls, without seeming to feel fatigue. And he was always fond of daring and active sports. A friend says: "He was in high favor with cricket clubs and at football matches. No one who ever swung a bat with him will forget his desperate earnestness on the 'Delta.' He played, as he worked, with all his might. He never let a fair chance escape him, nor claimed an advantage which his opponent was not ready to concede. As often as we gathered around the wicket in the October twilight, there was Gibbons, stripped to shirt and trowsers and ready for any post, his laugh the wildest, his shout ringing out the clearest, his restless manly figure the most distinct against the gathering darkness. And when the game was over, no one was sooner seated in his room than he, working away with all the zest that marked his play." It was said of him at this time that "nobody seemed so thoroughly alive as he." He *enjoyed* good health most heartily. He loved life. Mere existence seemed to him full of happiness and opportunity; and no one could ever think of

death as associated with him. When a young friend told him that she did not desire to grow old, he seemed puzzled, and said, "Why? you are not unhappy?" And when he heard of a young lady who wished to die, he said he could not understand how one could be willing to leave so intense a pleasure and so vast a responsibility as life.

The engraving prefixed to this memoir presents the most satisfactory likeness in the possession of his family. It is copied from a Daguerreotype taken about the time he entered college. It is, of course, an imperfect picture of a face that was always animated and full of emotion. There was in his countenance, as in his whole bearing, a singular mixture of the Quaker and the man of the world. There were repose, tranquillity and benevolence, and also fiery ardor, resolute will, courage and sagacity. He always had

> In his heart the dew of youth,
> On his lips the smile of truth.

His straight, light-brown hair, his full square forehead, his calm blue eyes, and his plain dress,

were not inconsistent with the traditional appearance of a Friend, but his vehement utterance, his nervous and rapid motions, his genial and unreserved manners, allied him more to "the world's people."

He occupied a pleasant room in the upper story of Stoughton Hall with a thoroughly worthy and congenial chum. His room was cheerfully but plainly furnished with the familiar furniture of his old room in Divinity Hall. A small book-case contained his favorite authors, and on the walls were hung little works of art that were associated with his New York home. "At the foot of my bed," he writes to his mother, "are hung the medallions of Grandfather and thyself—the first objects my eye falls upon in the morning."

He entered into all the studies and pursuits of his class with an energy and ability which soon produced a marked impression. On the ninth of September he wrote thus to his father:

On last Sixth Day night I was elected into the Institute, a Sophomore Society. The meeting was the

first of the term, and was held only for the purpose of electing members, and I regard it as a piece of good fortune that I was among the first elected. There was considerable difficulty in electing many of those nominated by their friends, as only two black balls rejected the nominee. I was elected in the first trial, which fact will give thee an idea of my cordial reception by the class, and by the best men in it. . . . .

We are now settled in our room, and at work. Although I don't have to work so incessantly as last year, my studies keep me confined to Cambridge, and I don't now expect to go to Boston as often as I did last year. Then I went every Seventh Day afternoon. Now I have to get ready for a recitation at eight o'clock on Second Day, and that seems to be the time to prepare myself. Besides, we have jollier times out here. There are some first-rate fellows in my class. . . . .

In a letter to his sister he thus describes meetings of the Institute, in which he took a prominent part:

SEPT. 16.

Before the meeting was over I was made one of the editors of the Society, the whole number being four. It is the duty of each to prepare once a month a paper containing original articles, written by such of the members as he can get to do it, and

himself—he, of course, controlling their arrangement and reading them to the Society. It is regarded as quite a distinction, and no one was so much surprised as myself by my nomination and election. When I was first spoken to about it—five minutes before the vote—and after my name had been shouted out by a few fellows, with only some of whom I was personally acquainted, I begged my friends not to run me, as I wished to avoid taking any conspicuous place in the class; and, as I was yet but little known, there could be no hope of an election against candidates who had been with the class through its Freshman year. I was so earnest, that, for a moment or two, they seemed to give it up; but then they and others came to me, saying that fellows wanted to know whether I would stand, and that it was a sure thing for me. Then I told them to go ahead, if they wanted to. Three minutes afterwards I was in possession of the office. It now only remains for me to do well in it, and I *will*.

TO HIS SISTER.

Oct. 14.

. . . . . Last Sixth Day I made a speech in the Institute that made the fellows applaud and even cheer tremendously. The justice of the war of 1812 had been under discussion, and I had listened, not very attentively, with my eyes shut, to what was said. When the regular debaters had got through,

and those who favored the idea of its injustice on our part, owing to their more thorough preparation of the subject, seemed to have rather the best of the debate, although the sympathies and prejudices of nearly all were against them, the President stated as usual that the debate was now open to all. For a few moments no one rose, although several were called for, and I among the rest. At last I got up, with about two ideas in my head, and began speaking in favor of the war, which was just what the fellows wanted. I don't know what was in me. I got thoroughly roused, and in two minutes was interrupted by applause and afterwards by cheers. I didn't say a single "splurgy" thing, nor any thing that was funny, but confined myself to the merits of the question, and at the end of five or six minutes sat down, and felt that what was in me had come out at last. I suppose I shall break down dozens of times more, but I've six times the confidence in speaking I had before, and I've found out that one must never speak if he hasn't something he feels he must say. . . . .

Don't think of the Anglo-Saxon lesson I have to get for to-morrow, or thee will have the nightmare. *Lufige hlafdige* means "I love a lady." Would thee imagine that so horrid a looking thing had so charming a meaning? . . . .

If thee obliges me in this, may be I'll write thee a letter that thee can be mysterious about, and refuse to let Sally and ——— peep at. . . .

His mother expressed to him some anxiety lest the demands of his editorship should interfere with his regular College duties; and he writes in reply:

Oct. 28.

. . . . . I shall stick to the editorship, because it does not involve my doing worse as a student than I should without it, because it is pleasant and advantageous in many ways, and because it was a great and unexpected compliment, and *because I undertook it.* . . . . .

He wrote the following playful note to a young lady "Friend:"

Oct. 28.

. . . . Thou art, I suppose, in the city. The piazza, where my last pleasant talk with thee took place, is exchanged for the less romantic parlor. If I were much of a believer in romance, I should regret that my next call on thee would have to be within, and not without the four walls of a house; but I am not, at least, in the romance of places. The romance of people is what I have faith in, and some can make a comfortable fireside as romantic as a damp, moonshiny night. Try thy hand at it next winter, and see whether thou canst not make me as sentimental, &c., in thy parlor, as on the Whitestone piazza. I was so intensely overcome

there, that the task will be difficult, but think of thy power. One of the many poetical effusions suggested by that occasion is the following, which I assure thee is strictly original:

> How dear to my heart are the scenes of last summer—
> When fond recollection presents them to view,
> The shaded piazza, the deep-tangled ivy,
> The talk in the dusk that my holiday knew.

Thou wilt perceive the delicate allusion, without my pointing it out. If it were a week-day, and I felt sure that thou wouldst not regard it as a liberty, I should fill this miniature sheet; but on First Day I dine a half an hour earlier than at other times, and thou art, perhaps, wearied with the nothings that I am too much in the habit of writing. . . . . .

The following letter was written November 4th, to his old teacher in New York, Mr. William H. Leggett. After describing the examination for admission, he proceeds:

. . . . The class I have joined numbers one hundred and three. It is, so far as the opinion of the Faculty can be got at, above the common run in the languages, but rather under it in mathematics. We, of course, use Mr. Peirce's books, which are the reverse of elementary, and only adapted, in my judgment, and that of others, older and wiser than my-

self, for those who have been over pretty much the same ground in other books. Were it not for the excellent preparation I got under you, I should despair of understanding half of what we go over, as is the case with nearly three-fourths of the class. Our Latin professor, Mr. Lane, is very strict and thorough, and never fails to teach us many new things every time we meet him. Mr. Felton, in Greek, is almost too easy with us, but those who wish to learn have a grand opportunity with him. We are now upon the "Birds of Aristophanes," which is amusing and pleasant reading.

I hope to take a respectable place in my class, and shall probably do so. My hurried fitting forbids my aiming at the first scholarship, even if I were disposed to sacrifice every thing to the class studies, and thought myself able, intellectually, to reach it. I have been cordially received by my class, much more so than I had a right to expect. They have elected me into the Class Society, the Institute of 1770, and given me one of its editorships. College life is pleasant, and any thing but idle. I work almost as hard as last year, and if work will do it, shall derive a great deal of benefit from the course. Living as we do here teaches us that there are many fully as able as ourselves, and some abler; that the only way to get rank and standing is by never failing in a single recitation; and that the only way to keep the good-will and esteem of our companions is to be universally kind and obliging; so that if we learn all these things, we shall go out far better than we came in.

The moral tone of the College is far higher than I expected. Vulgarity and excess of every sort are condemned by popular opinion, and men who are *only* fast are almost despised.

I remain your attached pupil,

WILLIAM GIBBONS.

TO HIS YOUNGEST SISTER.

Nov. 11.

Thou hast asked me for a "birthday letter," which I would gladly send thee if I knew what it was, or what thee wanted; but as I know neither, I am afraid thou wilt be disappointed. Besides, if thee means, as I guess (and only guess), a sort of a sermon, I am not the person to deliver it. Mother knows far better than I do what advice thee stands in need of, and gives it when required. If I had had notice, I might have written thee a little song for thy party, or a rhyme; but thy letter has come so lately, and I am kept so busy, that the leisure hour for such a thing comes but seldom. All I can say is, that I love thee very dearly, and, I think, better, every day. Thou art getting so womanly that I find in thee when I am at home, in thy letters when I am away, a companion, when I used to have only a little girl to pet; and one most pleasant to me, because, aside from thy being my sister, our tastes are similar in many respects. Then, as thou art the youngest of all of us, my interest in thee is not only that

of a brother, but has a mixture of the fatherly. Sally and I are so near of an age, and Jule *is so much older than she is*, that I regard them as equal to me; but there are between us almost six years, which is a great deal for our time of life, and thee is still girlish, so I feel that I am reverend beside thee, and that thou art a little dependent upon me, which may all be a mistake, but I don't think it is. Though I feel in this way, I have no advice to give thee, except to love me as much as thee can. . . . . .

The term, would thee believe it, is half over. Glad enough will we fellows all be when vacation comes. Thee don't know how much we all think of home. Great big boys talk about going home like little children. It is about the pleasantest feature of college life to find fellows, almost men, unite in being childishly fond of vacation, which gives them a chance to go home. . . . .

TO HIS FATHER.

Nov. 18.

My second paper came off on Sixth Day night, and was generally pronounced better than the first, with the exception of the Foot-ball piece, which seems to have pleased the fellows as much as anything could. Those of my friends who contributed, really worked upon their articles, and the contributions were, by far, the best that have been handed

in. One was a review of Longfellow's Hiawatha; one on "The Advantages of Living in the Fourth Story;" another on "Dew," an instructive piece, and far more entertaining than one would imagine it could be. My editorial was pretty long, but it took very well indeed. It was, of course, rambling and local. After I had finished reading it, a Junior sent A—— to get it for him to read over, although he had heard me read it. . .

I like my lessons. Mr. Lane makes Latin exciting. I'd rather be whipped than go into his recitation-room unprepared. If it ever happens that I can't get ready for a recitation, I shall go up, and tell him so. Mr. Felton can't be strict with young fellows like us. He is too jolly and good-humored; he laughs over the Greek Comedy we are reading, as much as we do, and joins with us, and makes us laugh more; and yet, there is no one out of the hundred and three in the class, who dares to be in the least disrespectful.

TO HIS SISTER.

Dec. 8.

. . . . . If thee has to write compositions, and don't like it, I can make thee thankful they are no worse, by telling thee of the themes we poor Sophs have to get up once a month, involving in their preparation hundreds of pages of reading,

hours of intense thought, and innumerable pages of manuscript. Some fellows must wade through three, four, or even five hundred pages of matter in writing each one. I am one of the lightest readers, and yet I had to put myself over 125 or 150 in writing the last. Our next will not require so much. It is "A Portrait of Horatio, after the sketch furnished by Hamlet." If we were not required to hand in four or five pages, I should put in simply this: [a grotesque sketch.] This, of course, is an ideal portrait. . . . .

While he was faithful to all the departments of instruction, he had, of course, his favorite studies and pursuits. His love of Latin and Greek was especially strong, and he was never tired of the minutest inquiries into the structure and idioms of those languages, while he appreciated heartily their beauty, force, and eloquence. As the letters quoted have shown, all his enthusiasm was roused by the Debating Society to which he belonged — the ancient "Institute of 1770." There all his imaginative and dramatic power, his moral courage, his sturdy common sense, his inflexible love of Truth and Justice, had full play. He was sensible, too, of the vast importance of writing well, of possessing a forcible and elegant

style. And so he always gave the most diligent attention to preparing and composing his themes. He wrote home: "I would rather be the best writer in College than best in any other one thing." He cultivated his literary taste by a careful and almost affectionate reading of the great masters of English poetry and prose, while he did not neglect the more solid depositories of facts. He entered at once into all the social pleasures of College life which are so innocent and so useful. From the first, the force of his character and the attractiveness of his manners were felt by his classmates. One of them says: "It was but little more than three months that Gibbons was with us, and in that brief period a very intimate acquaintance with many of the class was impossible. But all felt, from the first day he came among us, that his keen, earnest, lofty mind, united with so genial and happy a spirit, could not fail to lead wherever it went. None of us can ever forget the terrible earnestness with which he did every thing. On the Delta, in the Debating Room, at the Club Meeting, in the Recitation Room, he was always the same, always abounding in high animal spirits, in the power to make all about him

at ease and happy, and yet, behind all, showing the deeply thoughtful, earnest character of his mind." His chum during those three months bears the most emphatic testimony to the worth of his character as it appeared in that close relationship. "It was only necessary," he says, "to live with him, to love and admire him. My love and respect for him grew stronger every day. I gratefully and reverently acknowledge the blessing of having lived, though for so short a time, with one whose tender kindness and inspiring influence I can never forget."

Thus the future of William Gibbons seemed to hold in store for him every thing that his friends could desire; and all who knew him were sure that a young man of such high hopes and noble promise would be an honor and a blessing to his family, to the College, and to society.

But these bright prospects were soon to be clouded forever, and these cherished hopes must give place to disappointment and grief.

Saturday evening, the fifteenth of December, William spent at the house of an intimate family friend in Boston. He seemed, as usual, full of vigorous health and genial spirits, and often referred to his home in language of almost passionate love. On his way out to Cambridge he stumbled over some obstacle, and fell violently to the ground. But he felt no immediate injury, and alluded to the fall laughingly the next day. He went to Prayers and to Chapel Sunday morning. After dinner, while talking in his room with a friend about some plans for a Christmas merry-making, he suddenly complained of a sharp pain, dizziness, and nausea, which were soon followed by a slight hemorrhage from the stomach. He,

however, did not suspect that it was a hemorrhage, and yielded reluctantly to the persuasions of his friend and chum to stay at home from Chapel. He slept most of the afternoon, but was cheerful and easy during the evening. Several of his classmates came in, and he discussed various matters with them — themes, lessons, favorite authors, &c. About ten o'clock the hemorrhage returned, and Dr. Wyman was immediately summoned; and every thing was done that the highest skill and the tenderest solicitude could do. But the fall of Saturday night had worked an injury beyond all human reach, and the fatal depletion went on. In the morning, however, it was stayed, his mind was clear, and his physician thought he would rally in spite of the great prostration. It was proposed to send a telegram to his mother, but he refused assent, because it would alarm and distress her. In the afternoon, when he was evidently weaker, though still no danger was apprehended, a message was sent without his knowledge. When told of it, he expressed regret, and asked when it would reach the family, and in a few moments said, "Oh! I hope I won't die; it would kill my mother;"

which evidently expressed an anxiety for his mother rather than a thought of death for himself. And these were about his last apparently conscious words. As he grew weaker, he sank into a dreamy and uneasy sleep, from which he scarcely woke again. Several of his friends were sitting sadly by the fireside, listening for his low and irregular breathing, not suspecting, because entirely unused to the presence of death, when, about half-past seven, Dr. Wyman came in, and told them at once that he was dead!

The sad news spreading rapidly, overwhelmed the whole College community with grief and consternation. The Faculty, then in session, immediately adjourned, and the President and several others repaired to the room in Stoughton, where those appalled young men were gathered around the body of their friend. The usual gayety and earnestness of College life were hushed in awe and grief; and it was long before this solemn feeling ceased to sadden the hearts of the students, who had so suddenly lost the healthiest, the happiest, and the best-beloved of their number.

The body was immediately removed to the house of the President; and his room was left undisturbed till the arrival of his parents and uncle. When they came on, after the funeral in New York, they found his College home just as he had left it; on his study-table was an unfinished letter to his mother, on which lay as a paper-weight her broken medallion!

A Class-meeting was immediately held, which is described as pervaded with a deep and affectionate feeling of personal bereavement. The usual resolutions were passed, and a delegation of his most intimate classmates was appointed to accompany the body of their friend to New York, and to its last resting-place in Greenwood.

On Wednesday afternoon funeral services were held in the College Chapel, which was filled with William's friends from the various departments of the University. After a hymn and selections from the Bible, a very touching prayer was offered by Professor Huntington; and on the following Sunday, President Walker preached the discriminating

and impressive sermon which is appended to this Memoir.

The funeral in New York took place on Sunday morning, at his father's house. The company of mourners sat, after the wonted manner of the Friends, in perfect but expressive silence. And when the day wore on and the hard duty could no longer be deferred, they bore the beloved son, brother, and friend to Greenwood, and laid him by the side of his little brothers, and of his Grandfather Hopper—

His limbs at rest in the cold earth's breast,
His soul at home with God.

Few young men have secured the respect and love of so many and so widely different friends as William Gibbons. To indicate what a hold he had upon the esteem of those who knew him, some brief extracts are given below, chiefly from the letters of sympathy which his death called forth.

The President of the University sent the following note to Mr. Gibbons :

CAMBRIDGE, December 18, 1855.

My Dear Sir :—We are all so overwhelmed by this great and sudden affliction, that I can find no language in which to address the father and mother of the departed one, except to commit them to the sole and all-sufficient Comforter.

In a few days I shall write to you again. Meanwhile, allow me to commend to you three of his classmates, Anderson, Brick, and Learoyd, who desire to

accompany the remains to New York, that they may inform you of all the particulars of your son's illness, and testify to the love and respect felt for him by all who knew him, and the profound impression his sincere and beautiful character has made.

I pray you to accept my most sincere condolence, and to believe me to be,

Your friend and servant,

James Walker.

The letter below was sent by the President of the Class-meeting, in communicating the resolutions:

Cambridge, December 19, 1855.

To James S. Gibbons, Esq.—*Dear Sir:*—It has become my duty to communicate to you and your family the resolutions passed by the Sophomore Class of Harvard College, at a meeting called in consequence of the death of your lamented son.

We have great pleasure in thinking it may, in some measure, alleviate your grief, to know how much he was esteemed and loved by his college associates. The cold and formal style of resolutions is inexpressive at best, and seems an intrusion when it comes in upon the heart-rending sorrow of the bereaved circle. But, although no human sympathy can console you, I cannot refrain from saying, in behalf of the class, that we mean more than the mere form

of language expresses. We shall cherish his memory as that of one who was rapidly rising to the highest college honors, and who was already beloved by all who knew him.

The following are the resolutions :

Resolved, That since it has pleased God to take from us a classmate—one whom we loved and respected as a noble and upright man—we cannot but join in expressing our deep sorrow at so mournful an occurrence.

Resolved, That during the short time he was with us, we learned to look up to him as the most promising of our number, and that by his death the University has lost one of its most faithful students, our class its most brilliant ornament, and we, his associates, a sincere friend.

Resolved, That we deeply sympathize with his family in their great affliction, and we trust that our Merciful Father may strengthen them with the consolation which they so much need.

At the same meeting it was resolved that the class wear crape upon the left arm during the remainder of the term.

In behalf of the class,

GEO. E. POND.

FROM A CLASSMATE.

(To a Friend.)

The resolutions of our class meeting were no mere form, as would have been evident to any one who could have seen the interior of that room. It was very touching to behold the tearful faces, while not a word was uttered except the necessary motions, which were made in a voice scarcely above a

whisper. . . I never knew a person who possessed to such a degree as Gibbons, the faculty of inspiring respect as well as love. . . His love for his mother was intense, and he would have done any thing for her sake.

Such a great, loving heart I never knew. When I first became acquainted with him, I saw him do something which fascinated me with him, and though it does not sound much in telling, yet the way in which it was done I shall never forget. We were walking one evening, and met two or three ragged, barefooted girls. He stopped, and putting some coppers into their hands, said, "There, now, say Thank you, sir," and before they could utter a word he dragged me off looking so happy, that I could not but love him.

FROM A CLASSMATE.

Willie was the soul, the life of our Club. His energy and decision of character were equal to any undertaking. His generosity and amiability were without parallel. All that each one of us hopes for is a character as pure and noble as his. Of his friendship I was proud, and in after years I shall recall him as one of the noblest men that ever lived. . . . I always admired him, but never realized how essential he was to all our little projects. None of us have his indomitable will, a will which was always on the right side.

The following extract is taken from a letter written to Mrs. Gibbons by a classmate of William's, and dated Jan. 17, 1859:

To-day is the anniversary of the birthday of my dear friend Willie, and I feel an irresistible desire to write to tell you that his memory is still as fresh and green in my mind as it was three years ago, and so it will be till the day of my death. . . I believe that I fully appreciated the blessing and the good which I was enjoying in having him as a constant friend and companion; for my affection grew for him daily, and my admiration of his noble qualities constantly increased, and I felt that day by day he was imparting to me something of his own strength and goodness. What pleasant months of friendship were those few, in which we daily met to study the same lessons, and took our frequent walks, and talked of every thing! I can hear his voice now, chatting pleasantly upon various subjects, but especially as he used to speak of you all so fondly.

In him I could constantly see the beauty and the worth of true manliness, uprightness, and generosity; in him I learned especially to value perseverance and untiring industry; in him too the charm of affableness and genialty was so great, that none could approach him without being allured and drawn to him at once. The value of the friendship of such a one I prize more and more from its effects upon myself. Would that it could have been for a long life!

FROM C. L. BRACE.

Dec. 29, 1855.

I am visiting in Cambridge, and I hear the most beautiful accounts of your son's influence over his classmates. Dr. Walker's sermon produced a profound impression. All testify that in honor and true manliness he was an example to the College, and that his presence restrained from what was mean and sensual. His abilities are highly praised by cool judges.

FROM JOSEPH H. CHOATE, ESQ.

(To a Friend.)

My acquaintance with him was brief, but, from the first, I conceived a love for him which has ever since grown stronger. He came to the Law School in 1854, and entered upon the prescribed duties with all that zeal which marked every movement of his life. He was very diligent and devoted, and in spite of his great want, at that time, of mental discipline, he would have accomplished wonders had he remained in the course to the end. . . . .

Considering his age, and how much he would have to do in the way of preparation, it certainly required a good deal of nerve and self-denial to determine upon taking what must have seemed a long step backward, when he had already made much progress in his professional studies. But he decided to

take it, and I shall never cease to admire the manly resolution which he displayed in so doing, and the firmness of purpose with which he afterwards pursued his object. He was strongly ambitious, but this passion was always governed by an unerring sense of justice, and by that overflowing and universal sympathy which was an hereditary trait, so that he was, after all, only ambitious to be and do the best in every thing.

The following was written to a friend by W. E. Chandler, Esq., who was a fellow-student with William, in the Law School:

April 24, 1857.

Gibbons was, I think, one of the most affectionate and pure-minded persons I ever knew. He seemed to be, and, I believe, was wholly free from guile. He loved everybody. I never knew a person to whom he would not give every thing he had; and I never knew a person who was not equally devoted to him.

FROM WILLIAM'S PRIVATE TUTOR.

(To a Friend.)

Cambridge, Dec. 20, 1855.

He had become very popular, winning admiration by the astonishing versatility and quickness of his mind, and his comprehensive and thorough

scholarship, while he commanded general love by his generosity, frankness, simplicity, his affectionate and genial manners, his high principles, and his spotless character. In all my observation of young men, I have never seen one who combined so many of the intellectual and moral qualities which insure a brilliant and noble career, as William Gibbons.

FROM REV. M. D. CONWAY.

When your son came to Cambridge, I became immediately acquainted with him.

There were many young men with whom I had such personal arrangements, but to whom I was never drawn as to him. His was a warm, ruddy heart, and a mind aspiring to all which was noble and true. When I remember how, when I had been alone at our table in my hatred of slavery and sympathy with the absolute liberal faith, we on one day became aware that with the new face the blood of a Hopper was there, with all its brave instincts; when I remember how manly and honest he was, so that all respected him; and how his enthusiasm and energy gave us a hope equal to our demand upon the boy; I am ready, with you, to exclaim, "Oh! trusted, broken prophecy!" . . . . . .

I have thought that this testimony from a stranger to yourself to that sweetness and excellency in your son which won all hearts, which, as the Good

dies not, still live, might not be unwelcome. His face will ever be one of the pleasantest associations of my life in Divinity College. Alas! that after all, my letter should only amount to another proof of what a treasure you have lost!

FROM PROFESSOR PARSONS, OF THE LAW SCHOOL.

(To a Friend.)

Gibbons was a remarkable man. I think he has left no one in Cambridge more attractive, more winning, or more promising. The remarkable thing about him, as it seemed to me, was the very high standard he had set for himself. Dealing with such multitudes of young men of all kinds, as I do, I could not help studying them, even if I do not wish to; but in fact there are few things which interest me more than the indications and development of youthful character. No one thing will better serve to classify them, and place them in due relation to each other, than the standard which each sets before himself. That of Gibbons indicated power of mind, moral worth, and force of character, all in an eminent degree.

FROM PROFESSOR HUNTINGTON.

Next after the great faith that the Heavenly Father doeth all things well, your solace will be found, I am sure, in the life and the character of

your son. It would cheer your heart, sad as I know it is, to hear the cordial testimonies to his worth that rise up on every side among his acquaintances, and to feel the warmth of admiring love that comes from all lips at the mention of his name. Our usually light-hearted and animated community is overshadowed with a strange solemnity and grief today; but through this air of darkness and tears, there shines the bright and blessed memory of his virtues, his affections, his honest and faithful heart.

FROM HON. JOHN P. HALE.

We knew and loved him like a son and a brother, and I am sure I could have heard of no death out of the circle of my immediate family, which would have caused me more poignant pain. His death is one of those mysterious and inscrutable events which defy our reason, mock at all human philosophy, and almost stagger the strongest religious faith. His excellence and gentleness so won the hearts of his friends, while his intellectual progress and advancement flattered their hopes, that his future promised to be everything which the love or the pride of his friends could ask. For myself, I can say with truth, that I never knew a young man of whom I had higher hopes, nor one whose course I watched with such affectionate interest.

FROM REV. THEODORE PARKER.

LAST NIGHT OF THE YEAR, 1855.

My Dear Mrs. Gibbons :—I cannot let the clock strike twelve to-night without writing you the words which have so long been in my heart, longing to be uttered. You don't know how much I rejoiced in your noble son—for he made a deep mark on us all here, and we looked forward prophetically to future greatness and noble service for man, befitting alike his nature and his family. But it is otherwise ordered. How easy to write, to advise; how hard to say, "Father, Thy will be done!"

> "'Tis the most difficult of tasks to keep
> Heights that the soul is competent to gain."

But as sailors who suffer shipwreck only reach another harbor, not the one marked in their chart, but the invisible; so your beautiful-minded son graduates to higher than all college honors, proceeding not Bachelor of Arts, but at once *Master of Immortal Life*. If it be our so tender loss that he is advanced thus suddenly, it is his gain of Everlasting Honors. We must weep and long lament when such an expectation of earthly harvest is laid to the ground; but the fact that he was so much to lose is the great secret of consolation in such a case. The world seems how much poorer after such well-beloved promise is taken away; but Heaven seems so much nearer when such an object of the affections bends down the tall branches of the Tree of Life.

Alas, me!—the most I can say to you is, how

much I rejoiced in your joy of such a son, and now how much I sympathize in your human lamentation that he is gone. God wished him "a happy new year," and has taken him home to it. We would not bring him back.

With tenderest regards, believe me,

Sympathizingly yours,

THEO. PARKER.

Perhaps the most impressive testimony to the character William Gibbons had in Cambridge, among wise and unimpassioned friends, is borne by the following letter from the President of the University. It was written more than a year after William's death, to accompany a beautiful English copy of Milton's *L'Allegro and Il Penseroso*, which was sent as the "Detur" he would have received had he completed the Sophomore year:

CAMBRIDGE, Jan. 15, 1857.

My Dear Friend:—The College Faculty have just been engaged in the annual distribution of Deturs among meritorious students. If your son had continued with us, the best would have been given by common consent to him. And as he still lives in the memory and affections of us all as freshly as

ever, we could not repress the desire to carry out this purpose, and to ask you to accept the Detur in his name. We hope you will not be unwilling to retain this memorial, however slight in itself, of the profound affection and regard with which his name is cherished here.

. . . I shall always hold most dear whatever reminds me of that beautiful life, and of that death the sorrows of which would have been insupportable if they had not been hushed and subdued by infinite consolations. . . .

Very truly and affectionately yours,

James Walker.

The Memoir of a life so brief and uneventful as that of William Gibbons must owe all its value to the distinctness with which his character is portrayed. It has been the object, therefore, of the preceding pages to present that character as it was manifested and tested in the ordinary routine of his daily life, and to show the profound impression it made on the minds and hearts of all who knew and loved him. His salient characteristics were too sharply defined to escape particular notice in a merely general estimate of amiability and promise. One always felt in his presence that he was with a person of decided individuality, and full but unobtrusive possession of himself. One was never compelled to call him an "excellent young man," without any specification of his excellencies. They forced themselves separately upon the attention of every acquaintance.

Every one was impressed, even at a casual meeting, by the resolute energy, the fiery enthusiasm, the indomitable will, the executive force, which manifested themselves in all his words and acts, and even in his voice and walk. Whatsoever he found to do—whether it was of little or vast importance—he did with all his might; and he was never content with merely planning: he must act,—

Do noble things, not dream them.

There was a heartiness in him which inspired the most phlegmatic of his associates with vigor. He seemed to be possessed with a sense of the reality and solemnity of life, stirring and cheering, but never oppressing or alarming him. In his sports and in his studies, in his room and in society, he always had the same unconscious but passionate earnestness that swept away all thoughts of self, all restraints of conventionalisms, all disguises of vanity. Everything about him was full of emphasis. "I want," he once wrote, "to *underscore* every word I say." A cold, calculating nature, mindful of precepts and governed by rules, could

hardly understand the torrid impetuosity of his nature, controlled and guided by affection and conscience,

> Youth on the prow, and *Duty* at the helm.

Frederika Bremer, who knew him in his boyhood, said that he reminded her "of the new human being of whom the song of Vala speaks, 'fed with morning dew;'" and he never lost that fresh sparkle of youthfulness, which, seen in the mature character of manhood, charms and wins all hearts. Everything he desired, or attempted, or loved, became at once a most vivid reality to his imagination and affections. The dramatic element in life and literature interested him deeply, because it was real; and so too he found not only amusement but inspiration in the dramatic representations of the theatre, especially when the plot was not only natural but swift in its development and grand in its result.

> With a noble nature and great gifts
> Was he endowed, ...
> . . . . . an ample soul,
> Rock-bound and fortified against assaults
> Of transitory passion, but below
> Built on a surging, subterranean fire,
> That stirred and lifted him to high attempts.

He was a perfectly sincere person, with an all-pervading love of Truth, which made him both frank and fearless. He was unreserved and communicative, because he had nothing to conceal; no inbred and petted blackness to cover up. He was not without faults, as he himself well knew. He had, no doubt, some of the deficiencies and angularities which are incident to his temperament, but he was not vain enough to ignore them, nor proud enough to parade them. He was too downright in all his ways not to make his words and acts "simply true." No evasion or concealment satisfied him, whether the subject was the health of absent friends or a question of practical morals. When he broke down in his first attempt at a speech in "Parliament," he wrote to his parents the next morning a simple and full account of his failure, with no excuses and no demands for sympathy. Show for the sake of showing, crafty devices for keeping up appearances, he stood in horror of. He would not even have a book in his library as an unused ornament. When he was furnishing his College room and wished to fill his book-case, he wrote to his father: "Send me Longfellow, Bryant, Tennyson, and books I shall need,

not any others." He asked advice freely and sincerely, because he wanted the counsel of more experienced friends, and not because he desired to be flattered or confirmed in his own opinions. He also gave advice frankly and unsuspiciously, taking it for granted that the person who consulted him was thoroughly in earnest. Miss Bremer used to relate with amusement, that she once asked him to walk down Broadway with her and select a present for a young friend of hers, and that he selected a very beautiful fruit-knife, without suspecting, as a more self-conscious boy would have done, that it was meant for him. He had no dread of ridicule. He had courage enough to confess his mistakes and errors, and resolution enough to correct them. He had that bravery of soul which never shrinks from any danger or any duty, which never runs from an enemy or avoids a disagreeable or unpopular work. He was amply endowed with the highest physical and moral conrage; for he had that perfect love which casteth out *all* fear.

Indeed, the highest power and the fairest beauty of his character lay in his strong and compre-

hensive affections, his warm and catholic heart. He was never happier than when making others happy. His thoughtfulness for others was as constant as his forgetfulness of self. He wore the genial charm of true politeness — "kindness, kindly done." He was quick in detecting and bringing out the latent excellencies of people. In society, he was accustomed to seek out the least attractive persons to talk and dance with. Once his mother asked him why he wished a certain uninteresting and disagreeable person to be invited to the house on all social occasions; and he answered: "Because she *is* uninteresting and disagreeable." He possessed that vast power which, according to Emerson, dwells with cheerfulness. He had a sunny soul that brightened and blessed all who came within his influence. The tone of his voice and the grasp of his hand were full of hope and cheer. He enjoyed living, and was heartily fond of this world and its blessings. He never grumbled and never complained. He took things easily, and saw the bright light behind every cloud.

He had that unfailing sign of a generous and

genial nature, a strong love of children, which won to him all children's hearts. They came to him instinctively, sure of sympathy and help. With his childlike nature, he entered into their amusements with all their zest. And the last days of his life were spent in eager preparation for a Christmas personation of Santa Claus that should bring happiness and smiles to a neighboring family of children. But his love of home was his strongest and controlling affection. There all his happy memories and all his high hopes were centred. The approval of that family circle was compensation enough in all his disappointments, and stimulus enough in all his difficulties. His constant craving for the society of his home—his *home-sickness*—was apparent to all who knew him. "I shall not consider the world civilized," he wrote, "until there is a passenger telegraph, so that a fellow can spend at least his First Days at home." No sacrifice was a self-denial, which brought greater pleasure to those he loved at home. Their comfort and happiness were paramount considerations with him. As these pages have witnessed, he loved his sisters and his father with the intensest affection; he was their dearest friend, their

most intimate companion. But love of his mother was the tenderest feeling, the supreme motive of his life, and solicitude for her was his first thought as he caught a glimpse of approaching death. No wonder that, as his mother bent over the open coffin of such a brother and such a son, the cry was wrung from her lips:

"The Light of our Home—Gone Out!"

So strong and robust a character could not be symmetrical and wholly satisfactory without a well-developed and active moral and religious nature. And William Gibbons was not wanting there. Conscious of his twofold relations, and his consequent duties, to man and to God, he never blazoned them to the world, and he never forgot them. He was too sensitive and too reverent to talk much of such topics, like frivolous and flippant men; but his intimate friends knew well how deeply he felt and believed. He was too much of a Friend to relish forms and ceremonies or doctrinal discussions. He was brought up, as Dr. Walker says, to dwell more on the humanities than on the divinities of reli-

gion. He believed that "the best life is one which is most entirely filled with good and generous deeds; that the most loyal student of the Bible is he who reads it for the instruction of his heart; that the best profession of Christ is to be like Him, and the best service of God is to do His will, looking for no recompense, but finding the reward of goodness in goodness itself." But, though no dogmatist, he always respected sincere convictions everywhere; he never canted against cant. The letters to his father and mother, written March 25th and April 8th, 1855, and printed on pp. 58-60, show how seriously he had reflected on religious topics. He was once in the country where there were a large number of boarders, with many of whom he was on terms of friendship. Some ladies, in a conversation on one occasion, deplored his want of evangelical faith; but he said that probably the real difference between them was, that *he* had the most faith; adding that his faith consisted in confidence in the impressions which the Divine Being makes upon the mind, and not in abstract, traditional dogmas. Without his faith, he said, he should be the most unhappy of mortals, concluding by the em-

phatic declaration: "*Why, I live by faith.*" He had a love for man, a respect for human nature, which made him a genuine philanthropist, and gave a glow and dignity to all his intercourse with the ignorant, the slave and the criminal, with whom he was from childhood so frequently brought in contact. He believed with all his heart that "pure and undefiled religion before God the Father, is to visit the widow and the fatherless in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." The practical demands of his creed were unlimited love for all of God's children, and personal spotlessness of soul. And no young man ever carried out of the world a more unstained, a purer nature. He possessed, to use a fine phrase of Hare's, the feminine as well as the masculine of Honor—Purity as well as Truth. No one ever heard from his lips a word that could not be uttered in the presence of his mother and sisters, and he never suffered the faintest indelicate allusion to be made in his presence without instantly, but gracefully, changing the subject of conversation. Of him one could say as Southey wrote of a young friend of his:

"When he
Was by, the scoffer, self-abused, restrained
The license of his speech; and ribaldry
Before his virtuous presence sate rebuked.
And yet so frank and affable a form
His virtue wore, that, wheresoe'er he moved,
A sunshine of good-will and cheerfulness
Enlivened all around."

With such a trust in the goodness of God, and such a faith in the undying nature of man, as always filled and satisfied his heart, he could not but look upon death with composure, and feel an imperturbable confidence in the re-union of souls. Accordingly, there was in his conversation and in his letters, whenever any reference was naturally made to the subject, a quiet, thoughtful, serious cheerfulness, which we can remember now with the deepest satisfaction, while we believe, with him, that the life immortal is but a blessed continuation and completion of the life that is mortal.

For him there is no longer any future;
His life is bright—bright without spot it was,
And cannot cease to be. No ominous hour
Knocks at his door with tidings of mishap.
Far off is he, above desire and fear;
No more submitted to the change and chance
Of the unsteady planets. Oh! 'tis well
With him; but who knows what the coming hour,
Veiled in thick darkness, brings for us?

A

SERMON

Preached in the College Chapel, Cambridge, Sunday, Dec. 23, 1855,

By JAMES WALKER, DD.,

PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY.

SERMON.

Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother.—St. Luke vii., 12.

An event of such solemn and startling significance has taken place among us, that I am sure I should be doing violence to your feelings, as well as my own, if I were to look elsewhere today for the topics on which to address you. Convinced beforehand that my remarks will derive whatever force they may have from the occasion suggesting them, I am unwilling to break that force by introducing what I have to say with general and abstract discussion of any kind. Realities have been dealing with us; enough, if we can interpret them aright and lay them to heart. And so it is always. The effective teaching of humanity is not from human lips: we are what we are through the power of affecting providences, which take fast hold of our thoughts and imaginations, and exert a controlling influence over our lives.

The recent death which has taken place in

our society blends, to a remarkable degree, many things to afflict with many things to console.

We are struck, in the first place, with the profound impression which a sincere and beautiful character has made.

Something, in this particular instance, is doubtless owing to extraneous causes. He was older and more mature than most undergraduates, and he had previously been connected with another branch of the University, which made him more widely known, and more likely to be looked up to. Then, too, there was the suddenness of his death. But a few days, I had almost said but a few hours ago, he stood among us full of life and animation,—indebted, indeed, for no small part of his success and influence to a superabundance of vitality. At the touch of disease all this passed away so rapidly, that those who were looking on could hardly believe their eyes. And death looked so strangely in one of our College rooms, surrounded exclusively by young men, many of whom, perhaps, had never before stood in that awful presence. Everything was done that could be done by the most assiduous and devoted friendship; but there was no woman's, no mother's tender hand to smooth his pillow;—and she *such* a mother, and he a son so loving and so beloved! The only thought he uttered,

intimating a suspicion that his disease might be mortal, was the wholly unselfish one—"I hope I shall not die; for if I do, it will kill my mother."

All these things have entered into and deepened the impression occasioned by this death; nevertheless, it is mainly due to the respect entertained for a sincere and beautiful character,—for goodness, and for a peculiar style of goodness. His nature was so bright and genial, that he was almost sure to make friends at first sight. Another charm about him was this: although he was more than usually fond of society and social enjoyments, all felt that they were safe in his company; all felt that he knew where the boundaries of propriety and decorum were, and that he would not allow them to be overstepped, if he could help it. His likings and sympathies were also so catholic, and at the same time so natural and genuine, that persons of very different habits and persuasions were glad to be included in them; nay more, they were generally willing to believe that he thought very much as they did on all important subjects, though he did not always express himself in the same way.

Some parts of his character required to be interpreted with constant reference to the class of Christians among whom he was brought up. As a general rule, he made more account of the hu-

manities of the Gospel than of its sacraments. With him, to *live* the Gospel was the only way to *believe* it. He was also singularly faithful to "the inward light." He was not a man to crouch and fawn before a corrupt public opinion. Yet all descriptions of persons were drawn to him and loved him. Accordingly, one great lesson to be gathered from this view of his life, and to be insisted on here, is, that a student may be faithful to his sense of duty, and yet be almost universally popular; nay, this faithfulness to duty, firmly but modestly and unostentatiously expressed, may become the ground of his popularity. I must be allowed to press this point. When good men complain that their very goodness excludes them from the general sympathies, I believe they mistake, at least in most cases, the cause of the estrangement. In a vast majority of instances, it is some defect of temper or taste, which makes them personally disagreeable. Other things being equal, all men, at least all *young* men, whose impulses and aspirations must be supposed to be still unperverted, love to be in the company and under the influence of a noble and generous character. They love to bestow their affections on objects where there is no drawback of distrust or shame or ignominy.

There is also another distinction. The influence of a bad man is almost wholly personal;

it is the triumph of will over will; we feel that he has subdued us to *himself*, in spite of our original repugnance to his character and principles. On the other hand, the influence of a good man is almost wholly impersonal; there is nothing in it to affront our self-esteem; we do not feel as if we were submitting to *him*, but only to the principles which are recommended to us through his character, and which govern him as well as us. Who will say how much can be done, or how much has been done, in a community like ours, by a single pure-minded, upright and popular young man, to discountenance evil customs, to save amusements from coarseness and excess, and to give to public opinion a higher tone? But let those who aspire to fill the vacant place, remember that popularity and influence must not be their *aim;* for, in that case, the self-consciousness mingled with the purpose will spoil all. It must be the spontaneous homage paid to qualities which are cultivated and cherished for their own sake, and without a thought of self.

What made the character of our friend to be doubly interesting and influential here, was the circumstance that it met the sympathies of young men on so many points, and was easily intelligible to them, even in its very principle and root.

The principle and root of all was not a calculation of interest; neither was it a cold and stern determination to do what is right; nor yet a frequent and conscious recognition of the Unseen; but a large and living heart, *thorough-going affectionateness*. This was doubtless inherited, to a certain extent, in his very organization, but he had made it his own by habit,—a disciplined spontaneity, no longer acting as a mere instinct, but reflected on and exalted into a moral principle. It was this spirit which made it so easy for him to forget himself, and nerved him to incredible labor, when others were to be affected by it;—now gushing out in all manner of enthusiasms, and now flashing up into indignation against the wrong-doer; making him a favorite in society and the idol of home, and culminating, as all earthly affection must, in the love of a mother worthy of that love. Let me add, that with him the love of his mother was not a shallow and sterile sentimentalism, uttering itself at times in tears or in caresses, but still allowing him, when out of her sight, to do what he knew would pain her. It folded him round like a perpetual and real presence, making it impossible for him to forget or disappoint her hopes,—bending over him in seasons of temptation, and even in his last moments, so that when the first thought of dying broke upon him,

it instantly became connected, as we have seen, with its effect, not on himself, but on her. Who can help being reminded of a like thoughtfulness in the sinless One, as He hung on the Cross; and which has done so much to lend a new sanctity to this affection in the heart of the Christian world?

I have said that the springs of our friend's character were not overlaid and hidden under frequent and formal recognitions of the Unseen; but let me not be thought to intimate that such a character was formed, or could have been formed, without the thousand ministries of the Christian faith. On analyzing our best qualities, we are often able to trace them to sources higher than were professed, higher even than were known. "Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Again it is said: "God is love;" and "he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him."

But he is gone; and the many bright and pleasant memories he has left are clouded by the old perplexity, "How can these things be?" We can understand that men must die, for so it is decreed in their very organization. They die as the leaves fall in Autumn; but the leaves do not fall in Spring. It has ever been one of the darkest and most painful mysteries in Divine Providence, that so many young men, in the flush of health and spirits, full of promise, yet with their work but just begun, and knit by a thousand ties to loving hearts, should be suddenly cut off, while the old and infirm and worn-out still linger on, often against their will.

Perhaps the best answer to this difficulty is found in our utter incompetency to fathom the Divine counsels; in the obvious presumption on our part, as it must strike every one, of thinking to teach God knowledge. We talk about a man's dying prematurely, before the purpose of his existence is accomplished. How do we know but that the whole purpose of his existence here consisted in his being a good and happy young man; and that he was then withdrawn in order to save him from the evil to come; or perhaps that his example might have more effect from bearing the seal of an early death? I think, however, we can go one step further. Though

it is not for us to explain particular instances of early and distressing bereavement, we can see abundant reason to convince us that the *general law* under which they take place is wise and good.

Consider, for a moment, what would follow, if childhood, and youth, and early manhood, were exempt from mortality; if, for example, nobody died until he was sixty. Is it not as certain as that man is man, that the early part of life would be given, by the great majority, to thoughtlessness and present indulgence, or to extreme worldliness, and that all earnest self-culture, and all serious preparation for eternity, would be postponed to near the close of the period on which they could certainly calculate? Who has yet to learn that most persons are extremely indisposed, and that many seem wholly unable, to act earnestly and decidedly for a *remote* object? God, therefore, by making us liable to death from the time we first begin to breathe, and by making us feel that death is continually impending over us, has wisely and mercifully so arranged it as to make this an *ever-present* motive or restraint. Hence the secret of the amazing power exerted over mankind by the thought of dying, which does more, as I firmly believe, to keep alive a spirit of religion in the world, and through that,

a spirit of virtue and order, than all other causes put together. There are doubtless higher principles than this, and there are men who can enter into these higher principles; nevertheless, take away from the bulk of mankind the motives and restraints to be found in the mysterious overhanging of death, and I do not believe that society could be held together. And the power of this thought, let me repeat it, is not found in the *final* certainty of death, but in the certainty that it may come at *any moment*.

Therefore, though neither reason nor religion forbids us to mourn and weep over what may seem to us an untimely death, let us never forget that the general law under which it comes to pass is ordained in infinite wisdom and love.

Let me observe, further, that perhaps we use too strong an expression when we say of our friend, that he has *gone;* we certainly do if we say, he is *no more*. We never shall think justly, rationally, consistently, of death, until we come to look upon it, not theoretically alone, but practically, as being neither more nor less than a change of abode to the immortal spirit. Putting away all the illusions of the senses and the imagination on this subject, and giving ourselves up to the impressions and convictions of our better nature, illuminated and confirmed as they are

by the Word of God, we must come to regard death in no other light than as a transition from one mode of existence to another. To be Christians indeed, we must habitually feel and act under a deep and abiding assurance, that what we call *death* is not the extinction of a single particle of real life, but only the separation from life of all that is mortal, that nothing but life may remain. What we call *death* takes place, and mortality is swallowed up of life. The dead, then, are *not* dead. Our friends who are absent from the body, are present with the Lord. They are not *here*, but they are *there;* they *live*. Their bodies are dead, but their bodies are not *themselves*, and *never were*. Everything that is perishable or mortal about them has passed away; but it is only that death may not have power over them any more forever. Oh, that we all were so penetrated and filled with the spirit of this sublime doctrine, that we could look upon it, and be affected by it, not as a doctrine merely, but as a reality! How it would change the aspect of many of our bereavements, to believe, and feel, and know, that, in weeping for the dead, we are weeping for those who have passed beyond the reach of death; that the loved and lost, though not here, still live; that we may meet again!

But is it true that our friend is even so much as *gone?* There is a sense in which it may be said of us all, that we shall live forever in this world. We shall live in the ever-unfolding issues and consequences of the good or evil we do. And so of our friends whom death has transfigured. They are still living, and moving about among us in the ever-unfolding issues and consequences of what they did. In the anguish of *parting*, that single, all-engrossing thought fills the mind, and the heart is ready to break. But time and reflection open a rich and exhaustless storehouse of consoling and delightful recollections, in recalling the image of a departed son, or brother, or friend, and in dwelling on the qualities which made us cling to him here. How natural the often-quoted exclamation of a bereaved father as he followed a promising son to the grave, "I would rather have my dead son than any living son in England!" How many of us are ready to say the same! For what living friends would we exchange some of our dead friends! When we think about them, when we converse about them, when we are reminded of them by a thousand familiar objects, they seem to stand before us; the signs of all anxious care and worldly imperfection have disappeared, and the unclouded serenity of heaven is on their brow. Nor is it

to no moral and religious purpose that we can turn this spiritual intercourse with the dead. In all seasons of excessive sorrow, in all seasons of thoughtlessness, indiscretion, and temptation, when our courage is sinking, and our consciences are wavering, we look up, and the same calm, reproving, but benignant countenance is turned on us still.

The Evangelist says of the young man mentioned in the text, that on being restored to life, "he sat up, and began to speak." There has been no visible resurrection here; but he who is dead was never so much alive to your affections as now, and if his lips were to move once more, you know what he would say.

He would pray you never to mar the pleasures and amusements proper to your age by the touch of impurity and excess. In the earnest struggle for distinction, in the generous rivalries of this place, he would pray you to guard against the first approach of a selfish or sinister purpose. The holy affections of friendship, and kindred, and home,—he would tell you that they only are worthy of them, that they only know what they are, who *keep* them holy. He would cry out to you, that a large and generous soul is a better armor against temptation, than a whole library of technicalities. As sons and brothers, he would

conjure you to consider that you cannot live or die to yourselves; the peace, and comfort, and life of others are bound up in your good conduct and success. He would call on you to scorn those who are afraid to act out their good principles, but not afraid to act out their bad ones. He would reveal to you the secret of true courage, which consists in having nothing to conceal; and of a happy life, which consists in living to make others happy, and in enjoying their happiness as well as your own. In all your aims and plans of life, he would implore you not to commit the mistake of expecting to find your happiness and usefulness in what you *have*, and not in what you *are*, in your condition and circumstances, and not in the temper of your minds, and in self-culture and self-control. Leaving to others the metaphysics of duty and religion, he would insist that the best life is one which is most entirely filled with good and generous deeds; that the most loyal student of the Bible is he who reads it for the instruction of his heart; that the best profession of Christ is to be like Him, and the best service of God, is to do His will, looking for no recompense, but finding the reward of goodness in goodness itself.

Finally, he would carry back your thoughts to the scene, which some of you witnessed, when his

own strength was suddenly struck down, one change succeeding another so rapidly, that he probably passed out of this world without having any distinct consciousness that death was near. He would say to you, "Be ye also ready." Again, however, he would insist, that the best preparation for death is a good life. Preparation for eternity does not consist of something which may be regarded as a piece patched upon life; it mingles with the mysterious web; it becomes part and parcel of the life itself; it is the whole life, pervaded by a conscientious and devout spirit, and habitually devoted to the pure, useful, and lofty purposes for which it was given.

Unless you consider these things, he would tell you that all measures to testify your respect for his memory must be unmeaning and inconsistent. He would beseech you to consider these things; for, otherwise, so far as you are concerned, he will have lived and died in vain.

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